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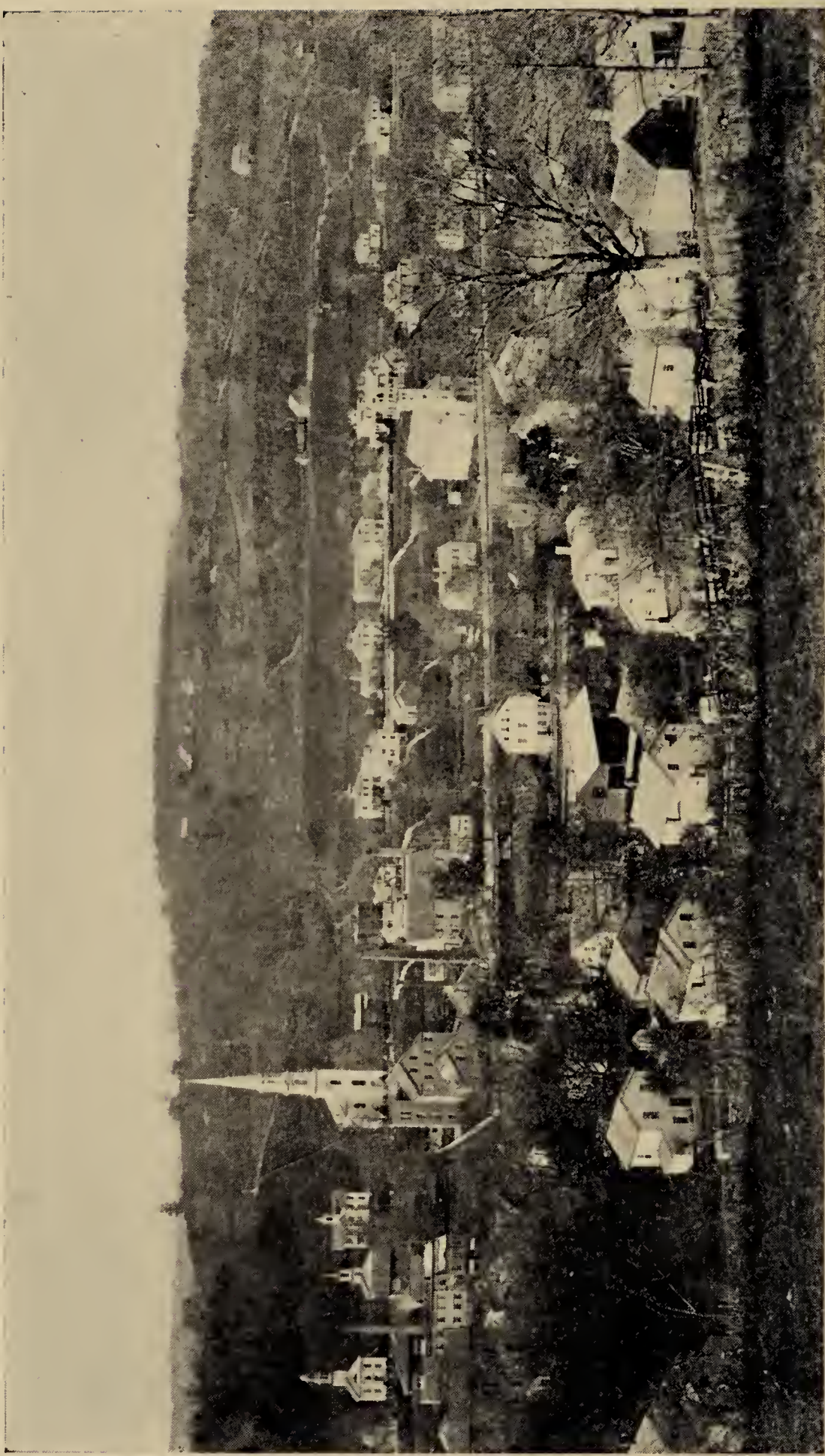












NAUGATUCK IN THE 1860's LOOKING WEST



*History of*  
NAUGATUCK  
*Connecticut*

BY

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NEW HAVEN

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## PREFACE

EVERY American town or city has many features common to communities of the region where it lies. Each possesses some general characteristics that stem from geographical location, from a common heritage, and from settlement by peoples of similar racial stocks. So in some degree every town history is national history reflecting trends of each period of the nation's past. On the other hand, every community also has unique qualities born of events peculiar to itself, influenced by personalities differing sharply or slightly from those who gave a turn to the history of a neighboring town.

Few towns display more perfectly than Naugatuck, Connecticut, this duality of the usual and the unusual. Unequipped with knowledge of Naugatuck's development, a traveler might drive through the borough along the river heading south from noisy, outspreading Waterbury toward Seymour, Ansonia, and Bridgeport on Long Island Sound, without realizing that Naugatuck is like these other cities but at the same time enormously different. He might see only another New England manufacturing city, combining with the vigor of any place that produces articles for human use the visible disharmonies of factories and shops in a community dedicated to making material things; a rather drab spot where the natural beauty of the surroundings has been lost in man-made ugliness. But seen with an understanding of the struggle which the emergence of the modern borough typifies, and with some comprehension of the vagaries of fortune that made Naugatuck the first rubber town of America and that have kept it in the forefront of scientific manufacturing, the ugliness is transformed, or takes on a fascination of its own. What prevented this little valley town set among the western Connecticut hills from duplicating the uneventful career of the towns of the Housatonic valley just over the mountains to the west? Can one

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believe that in casting off the role of the simple agricultural village Naugatuck plunged into a life laden with griefs and frustrations which could have been evaded? Wherein does this city, even today having less than seventeen thousand inhabitants, distinguish itself from other New England mill towns? What gives it peculiar flavor? Because one may find the answers to such questions, the history of another New England town becomes justified.

No other section of the United States is so well supplied with local histories as New England. Though they frequently serve as sources for odd bits of lore that, pieced together, contribute specific information to a larger, more significant story, the student of modern America finds most New England town histories dreary reading. In writing this chronicle I have attempted constantly to present against the background of the universal the distinctive features that make Naugatuck. Not all citizens of the borough will agree with my selection of material. I have included many paragraphs describing conditions that are duplicated in virtually every industrial community in America. Whether commendable or deplorable, they constitute, I believe, an essential part of the story, a part without which the whole has little meaning. One reader may find too much space allotted to discussion of labor-management relations in Naugatuck's factories; another may consider the descriptions of manufacturing processes inadequate. Perhaps many people will be disappointed at omission of much anecdotal detail about individuals, living and dead. The responsibility for inclusion or omission of known data and, perforce, therefore some interpretation of what is known, is wholly mine. The facts themselves, "stubborn and irreducible," in William James's phrase, have been beyond my control.

One distinction is Naugatuck's which cannot be over-emphasized: the courage of the townspeople in wishing to have the truth about their town told. Every hamlet, every metropolis in America has seen its past and its present develop situations of which it can not be wholly proud. The temptation to conceal or



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even to deny them is human. But Naugatuck with wisdom and vision has rejected half-truths. Though the borough is revealed as far from faultless, the willingness of its citizens to admit their weaknesses and to submit to analysis the origins of their shortcomings is as admirable as it is rare.

To the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce who sponsored the preparation of this volume, special acknowledgment is due. Their interest in the undertaking has given me both material and moral support. Members of the History Committee of the Naugatuck Chamber of Commerce, W. M. Chittenden, Chairman, E. M. Barnum, H. P. Baldwin, W. E. Bittle, Emily Sophie Brown, H. L. Carter, H. E. Chittenden, Jessie F. DeShong, L. A. Dibble, Rev. G. F. Dunn, Helen G. Moroney, Irene L. Squires, C. B. Tuttle, D. S. Tuttle, and H. Whittemore, Jr., have given time and effort to make this history accurate and fair. My debt to the subcommittee of townspeople, Miss Jessie F. DeShong, Librarian of the Howard Whittemore Memorial Library, who painstakingly assembled obscure letters and diaries, Miss Helen G. Moroney, Principal of the Salem School, who checked especially all data relating to the school system, and Miss Emily Sophie Brown, all of whom have contributed generously of their time and special knowledge, and particularly to its chairman, Mr. Earl M. Barnum, is greatest of all. Miss Irene L. Squires, Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce and member of the committee, has also been very helpful. Without their patient collaboration many sources of fact would not have been available, and their assistance in interpretation of materials has been invaluable. The collecting of the local photographs which illustrate this volume is wholly the work of this subcommittee.

It is therefore with the utmost appreciation of the distinguished quality of its citizens that I offer this book to Naugatuck.

CONSTANCE McL. GREEN

December 1946

Northampton, Massachusetts





## CHAPTER I

### *Naugatuck in 1944*

THE stranger arriving in the borough of Naugatuck in the 1940's sees few vestiges of an old New England town. The rock-strewn river, in a thin milky flow, wanders past mills and mill yards; the railroad tracks skirt the banks; and the steep hills, plunging down toward the brick strongholds and tall chimneys of the town's industries, are dotted with frame houses of indeterminate age. Great trees conceal the pleasant, modern homes of the well-to-do. A few three- or four-story office buildings, a single apartment house, and a row of unpretentious ten-footers line the main streets, one on the left bank, one on the right bank of the river which bisects the town. Apart from the "green," created in the nineteenth century to serve as a focus for the two churches, the school, and the Town Hall and the library built later, there is little to indicate that Naugatuck lies in Connecticut, rather than in Ohio or even Oregon. The windows of the A & P and First National stores, of the chain dime stores, of the corner drugstores with their cigarette posters and toothpaste displays, might look out on the shoppers of Ware or Great Barrington, of Bristol or Putnam, or of any other ancient American village transformed by the machine age into a manufacturing town.

Perhaps the nature of the terrain, the gulch-like valley with only meager stretches of level land at the river, accounts for the ruthlessness with which the industrial present has eradicated the signs of the past. To the valley of the Naugatuck, wealthy retired sea captains and rich merchants were not attracted as they were to the hill-top towns of western Connecticut or to the wide spaces of localities like Norwich. The conservative and domineering influence of a

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few powerful, aristocratic families found no enduring place here. Of practically equal age with Middlebury, Woodbury, and Watertown, and even older than Litchfield, towns which still display their seventeenth and eighteenth century origins at every turn, Naugatuck, in emerging from over a century of farming into an era of manufacturing, destroyed the old to make place for the new. There was not room for both.

In the "Deacon's Meadow" of the seventeenth century, just north of the present bridge on the west side of the river, rise today mills of the United States Rubber Company. West on Rubber Avenue, in a building where in the nineteenth century hosiery and woolens were knit and woven, the Lewis Engineering Company turns out its precision instruments, while nearby the Risdon Company manufactures its machine parts and metal goods. Further downstream stand the buildings of what began one hundred years ago as The Goodyear's Metallic Rubber Shoe Company, the first rubber shoe factory in the world. And below these, punctuating the skyline with its great black iron funnels, is the rubber reclaiming plant fed from the huge piles of old automobile tires that fill the mill yards. From the Indian "canoe place" of the 1670's up and down the river for half a mile the heaps of greyblack tires, dumped behind wire fencing, line the bank, compelling the eye in their ugliness and yet provoking the imagination as well. Adjacent are the laboratories of the rubber chemical plant. Still further south rises the new synthetic rubber mill flanked by huge gleaming spheres for storing butadiene and a great "burning stack." Beyond here mill yards and streets give way to plots speckled with small frame houses set among a few old apple trees, until the town drifts off into open country, broken by the hills that close off the community at the narrows of the river, at the Straits.

To the west of these areas built up by industry along the river, a long ridge stretches northward, the "Great Hill" of seventeenth century grants, upon which the business leaders of our day have built their homes to look out over the nar-



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row valley, over the chimneys and factories which sustain the town. At the north of the heights Hop brook swings down into the Naugatuck river past the unobtrusive buildings of the Eastern Malleable Iron Company works. Hop brook alone of all the five mountain streams that launched Naugatuck upon its industrial career one hundred years ago rushes today with a volume of water large enough to hint of the power that once turned water wheels for shops along all the streams. Beyond the cliff the land included in the township falls off into open meadows where small homes still house families who work in the factories in the center. Still further west, up along the charming stretches of Long Meadow brook, clustered around the tiny falls at Millville, a small settlement survives. Higher up the valley, running up the hills that mark the boundaries of Middlebury and Oxford, remnants of eighteenth century Gunntown stand in the form of a few old farmhouses, and of the Gunntown burial yard with its score of beautifully carved gravestones marking the extinction of the half dozen families who dominated the life of Gunntown one hundred fifty years ago.

East of the river still less remains of a simpler, dignified past. At the northern extremity of the town, where in mid-nineteenth century Union City grew up at the mouth of Fulling Mill brook, small stores and gas stations line the Waterbury turnpike. Along this broad concrete highway great motor buses, bound for Waterbury to the north or New Haven to the south and east, rush by, crossing the culvert that carries Fulling Mill brook to the Naugatuck river almost unperceived. Fulling Mill brook itself trickles down alongside the road mounting to the town of Prospect, and only vivid imagination, fed by an occasional glimpse of stone abutments of dams and shops long since vanished, permits of a mental picture of the Yankee community of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Fulling Mill brook's ten or more water powers that created the Yankee notions for which the region was noted have dwindled into nothingness, their sites over-

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grown with trees and brush or built up with small houses tenanted by second generation Lithuanians and Poles. The second oldest house in Naugatuck today, the Thomas Porter homestead built about 1752, stands not far from the mouth of the brook, so surrounded by humble houses and their adjoining sheds and hen yards that it is difficult to view the harmonious proportions of the pleasant old dwelling. Only at the very mouth of the brook, at its convergence with the river, does one plain frame factory building still stand. Just beyond rise the red bricks and golden cross of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church.

Still further south, beyond the bridge which links the eastern half of the town with the west bank, stores give way to wooden tenements which rise up the hillside in piazzaded tiers to make "Little Italy." As the road to Bethany and New Haven mounts the plateau to swing eastward away from the river, one comes upon a modern factory, set off by well kept lawns, home of Peter Paul, the candy company.

Not until one approaches Beacon Hill brook, south at the edge of Bethany, or turns down from the New Haven Road toward the river, may one see in Straitsville some evidences of the past. On one side of the road, shaded by great elms, is a handsome, old, pillared house, the tavern of 1811. Depredations of time and circumstance which converted the gracious inn into a six-family tenement have not succeeded in destroying its beauty of line. The days when Straitsville, as a coach-road stop between New Haven and Litchfield, boasted a post office, a thriving country store, a malleable iron foundry, and several clock shops located along Beacon Hill brook, are not hard to conjure up. Along the lower reaches of the brook once stood a cotton mill that gave its name to Cotton Hollow. On the ruins of the old factory are today a few dwellings, and small farms occupy the triangle between the brook, the river, and the New Haven road. Yet, while only Collins "Hotel" visibly ties the past to the



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present, more flavor of time gone-by surrounds Straitsville than other parts of Naugatuck.

The factory town of 1944, a center of rubber manufacture and chemical research, of malleable iron manufacture, the source of various important lines of metal wares, and the home of famous packaged candies, is thus a factory town, not a sleepy and beautiful New England village. Few of its leading citizens today are natives to Naugatuck; still fewer stem from Yankee families. Over half of its 17,000 inhabitants are by extraction Irish, German, Swedish, Italian, or Polish. No nostalgic viewing of the past can reconvert the hill-hemmed manufacturing town into a sedate community dominated by old families and Puritan tradition, however modified. Roman Catholic and Swedish Lutheran congregations dispute the supremacy of Congregational and Anglican influences. And in politics the Democratic party affiliations of the newcomers have largely submerged the power of "staunch" old Republicans.

Fortunately few citizens of Naugatuck devote energy to mourning for the unreturnable past. Aware of the possibilities of the future, they waste scant time in futile regrets that so little of the gracious outer aspects of eighteenth and nineteenth century New England has been preserved in the borough. Fewer prejudices against new nationality groups obtain; less depressing pseudo-superiority of Yankee over Irish, Swede, Italian, or Pole exists than can be found in most American manufacturing cities. It seems probable that this refreshing generosity of attitude grows out of the temper of the town in earlier days when nearly every substantial householder ran his shop as well as his farm and, from experience born of working at a skill with his own hands, learned to respect the honest work of any craftsman. If so, despite the loss of the outward material things, the inner spirit of the old New England town has been preserved.





## PART I

*The Era of the Farmer*





## CHAPTER II

### *The Founding of Waterbury*

IN 1673 western Connecticut inland from Long Island sound was still a wilderness; only trappers and hardy adventurers in the colony had explored it somewhat. The first interest in the region around the river which came to be called the Naugatuck had grown out of the discovery of a hill thought to contain black lead, and in 1657 two men of Farmington acquired from the Indians mining rights in a tract of land called "Matetacoke" including the hill from which the lead came. Although the lead deposit proved non-existent, some sixteen years later the richness of the land at the intervals of the river, by then better known, inspired men of Farmington to seek rights to settle there. The place called "Matetacoke" or "Mattatuck" lay twenty miles west of the settlement at Farmington, twenty miles of pathless forest, most of it still an Indian hunting ground. Stretches along the river itself were favorite Indian fishing sites. But open meadows such as lined the river for several miles above the narrows were highly desirable, and in the fall of 1673 twenty-six men of Farmington petitioned the General Court of the colony of Connecticut to sanction the planting of a new settlement there. At this point the history of Naugatuck begins; for Naugatuck for over one hundred and seventy years was part of Waterbury.

For such a venture as settling a new locality the necessity of official approval of the Governor and General Assembly of the colony was recognized. For although Hartford and other Connecticut river towns, New Haven, and settlements along the coast were firmly rooted, no Englishman could fail to acknowledge the hazards of undertaking a new plantation far removed from the established communities.

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After 1663, without approval of the General Court, no individual might purchase from the Indians any land within the limits of the jurisdiction of the colony, a jurisdiction which the royal charter proclaimed as extending to the western ocean. The thinly peopled little colony could not afford to risk unduly the lives of any settlers. And, in accordance with Puritan principles, that new towns to rise might be grounded in Christian faith, only sites capable of sustaining a sufficient number of families to provide for a minister of the Gospel could be approved. The procedure, therefore, was to appoint a committee of the General Court to consider the reasonableness of the petition and to investigate the suitability of the site.

The twenty-six petitioners for the privilege of settling Mattatuck, as Waterbury was first called, were mostly young men. Inasmuch as Farmington itself in 1673 had only eighty-four families to occupy its great township, the plea of the petitioners, "being sensible of our great need of a comfortable subsistence," can scarcely be interpreted today as springing from land hunger. There is reason to believe that each of the petitioners had his own house in Farmington and was not in straightened circumstances. Rather we must conclude that the signers of the petition were seeking freedom from the restrictions of the older settlement and opportunity to hold positions of honor in a new. Whatever their reasons, their appeal was promptly acted upon, and the General Court immediately appointed a Committee of five to view the proposed location. In the spring of 1674 the Committee reported the place capable of accommodating thirty families, the number necessary to support a minister, and the court appointed a Grand Committee to supervise the administration of the new plantation.

In 1674, therefore, thirty-nine men of Farmington entered into articles of agreement, indicating each the extent of his financial responsibility in the enterprise by an entry opposite his signature. One hundred pounds was the largest



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sum listed, fifty pounds the least. The exact workings of such proprietors' agreements, their relationship to the colony, and the financial dealings of one proprietor with another are hard to understand. The purchase from the Indians of title to the soil at Mattatuck was made by the Grand Committee in 1674 for a sum of thirty-eight pounds, which the proprietors three years later duly repaid to the Committee. We must guess that each of the proprietors paid his proportion of this and other expenses, the man with a hundred pound propriety paying twice the amount paid by the man listed as having fifty pounds in the undertaking. There is, however, no record to indicate that each proprietor was actually called upon for support in any exact relation to the amount entered by his name in the articles of agreement.

These articles of agreement, whereby each signer became a participant in the undertaking, were specific about both privileges and obligations. Every person accepted as an inhabitant of the plantation was to receive eight acres as a home lot. But the meadow lands which constituted the main wealth of the projected community were to be apportioned to each signer according to his estate as entered opposite his name, in other words, according to his financial commitment. No proprietor was to have more than a hundred pound interest. For the first five years the taxes for public expenses were to be charged to each proprietor in proportion to his holdings of meadowland, and thereafter the rates were to be on polls and estates in conformity with the law of the colony. The obligations to be met were equally clear. Every person accepting an allotment must within four years build a substantial house, he must personally dwell as an inhabitant of Mattatuck, and he must maintain his residence there for four years. Otherwise he forfeited all rights and titles in the land, and the Committee might dispose of his allotments to persons ready to comply with the conditions stipulated.



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In the summer of 1674 some of the new proprietors set out over the twenty-mile trail from Farmington to the chosen site on the Naugatuck river to begin the task of laying out the settlement. But the time was ill-chosen. The following summer kindled to flame the simmering hostility of the powerful Narraganset Confederation of Indians, and the outbreak of the bloody King Philip's war exposed outlying settlements all through New England to overwhelming danger. By October the General Court of Connecticut ordered planters in remote localities to withdraw to defendable places and, in consequence, most of the men at Mattatuck probably returned to Farmington, leaving only a few men to harvest the crops grown in that summer of 1675 and to transport the corn to Wallingford for safe-keeping. So discouraged were some of the original proprietors that, when in 1677 it was thought safe to resume the settling of Mattatuck, a number abandoned the enterprise. The last organized Indian attacks, those against Hatfield and Deerfield in Massachusetts, and the last requisition of Connecticut troops to defend the white colonists occurred in September 1677, but the fear of sporadic Indian raids deterred even hardy men from removing their families into the wilderness on the Naugatuck.

So the plantation had to begin again. New signers of the articles of agreement assumed the responsibilities of those who withdrew and the Committee for Mattatuck extended by a year the time limit originally set within which the proprietors must take up residence in the new community. "Absenteeism" was not to be countenanced. Any man unwilling to face the hazards of moving his family to Mattatuck and taking his full share of the burden of developing the settlement forfeited his proprietor's rights. By November 1679 most of the subscribers had lived up to the conditions of building houses and establishing their households here. But a few had delayed. Against these latter the actual dwellers in Mattatuck three years later appealed to the Grand Com-

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mittee, demanding forfeiture of the defaulters' proprietary rights in the settlement. Nor were the requirements eased for inhabitants whose dwelling houses failed to conform to the stipulations. Several houses were protested for lacking chimneys or for not being of the prescribed dimensions. For some of the defaulters the penalty was merely imposition of another year's residence in Mattatuck before their titles to their lands were recognized as absolute. Others lost their proprietary rights entirely. New incumbents, after purchasing the buildings on the forfeited lands, were in turn constrained to fulfill meticulously the terms of the original articles of agreement. The seventeenth century Puritans obviously believed that only by such strict conformity to the rule could a permanent new community be built. Settlers of later generations, if prone to envy the privileges of the proprietors, did well to remember the exactions of courage and energy required of the first comers.

In 1680 the proprietors came to agreements first with men of Derby and then of Woodbury about plantation boundaries. On the east side of the Naugatuck river Beacon Hill brook marked Mattatuck's southern limit, on the west side a line run over "Twelve Mile" hill where was placed the stake marking Derby's northern boundary, twelve miles from Milford's north bound. The boundary between Mattatuck and Woodbury to the west was run eighty rods east of Quassapaug pond. In each case the General Court confirmed the bounds as described. Town officers were elected in 1681 and thereafter the Committee for Mattatuck largely left direction of plantation affairs to them. Five years later, in May 1686, the town, now taking the name of Waterbury, was formally admitted into the corporation of Connecticut as a separate entity, the twenty-seventh town of the colony.

Meanwhile the proprietors had to secure from the Indians additional titles in the soil, although the deed of 1674 appeared to have given the white men clear title to land running north and south for ten miles on either side of the



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river and six miles wide. In 1684 Deacon Thomas Judd and John Standley, acting for the plantation, bought scattered pieces of land within the original grant—probably small lots to which there had been rival Indian claimants—and also a tract of land running northward from Mt. Taylor for eight miles. These purchases were made from the Farmington or Tunxis Indians. But the proprietors found it wise in February of 1686 to conclude a negotiation with the Derby Indians as well, whereby the twenty parcels of land in the southern part of the town already bought from the Tunxis tribe were again bought from the Derby Indians.

This land, nearly identical with the township of Naugatuck today, was described as extending upon the east side of the river from “Wecobemeas, the land upon the brook or small river that comes through the Straits northward of Lebanon and runs into Naugatuck river at south end of Matatuck bounds, called by the English Beacon Hill brook,” to “the brook at the hither end of Judd’s Meadows, called by the name Sqontk” and eastward to Wallingford and New Haven bounds; on the west side of the river the parcels included those from “Saracasks” to “Towantucke; and half the cedar swamp, with land adjacent from it eastward. . . .” The English settlers obviously were unwilling to risk disputes with any of their Indian neighbors. In fact, twenty-five years later the scrupulous settlers obtained still a fifth deed to confirm their rights to a small piece of land in the southwestern part of Waterbury, although this plot was included in the purchase of 1686.

The plantation bounds now included eighteen miles of lands north and south, ten miles east and west, about one hundred thirty-six square miles in all. The wilderness marked the northern bound, Farmington, Wallingford, and New Haven the eastern, Beacon Hill brook and the Derby line the southern, and a line run eighty rods east of Quassapaug pond the western limit. One hundred and fifty years later John Barber, the Gazetteer, was to exclaim in wonder



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that the town pronounced capable of supporting thirty families had achieved a population of 8,000 persons!

Although the growth of Waterbury after 1686 was not rapid, it was steady. The original location of the "Town Plot" had been moved from the west side of the Naugatuck river to the east side in 1678, after the proprietors resumed the planting of the settlement. House lots were reduced in size from eight acres to two acres for each family, thus making possible a more compact town. The layout of the town was like that of all early New England settlements: a common, flanked by the home lots with a desirable plot set aside for the minister, and outlying meadow and woodland apportioned to each man according to his proprietary rights. All land was distributed by drawing lots for first choices, because the Puritan believed that God so showed His will in human affairs. Every man accepted his assignment accordingly, though the least of the settlers might receive the most accessible and most fertile acres, the most influential man less good. But the committee of the proprietors conducting the division of land was empowered to "throw in" land to equalize the allotment, so that seven rods of poor land might be rated as three of the best. The assignment of land went on for many years as newcomers came and were accepted as inhabitants. As early as 1680 a miller, Stephen Hopkins, was awarded thirty acres on condition that he build and operate a grist mill. Later a carpenter to run a sawmill and in 1722 a blacksmith, by similar inducements, were brought into the community.

Once well launched, the development of Waterbury is in no essential respect different from that of other pioneer Connecticut towns. Duties of fence-viewing, road-building, tax-collecting, and participating in drilling with the militia to guarantee the defense of the settlement were shared by all able-bodied men. Danger from the Indians was by no means at an end in the last years of the seventeenth century and first decades of the eighteenth. In 1707 in a sudden raid the

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savages carried off a man and two of his sons to captivity in Canada, and the next year the colony gave the town fifteen pounds to expend on fortification. For a number of years thereafter the menace of sporadic Indian raids continued, and probably only unremitting vigilance on the part of the settlers prevented considerable loss in life and property. Self-protection as well as participation in the church life of the community forbade scattering the homes of the planters far from the village green.

Nor were hostile Indians the only threat to the new town. In 1692 a great flood destroyed the fertility of some of the intervalles and led to the departure of some householders. By 1694 Waterbury could claim only twenty-five families. Nineteen years later a "great sickness" carried off thirty of the two hundred inhabitants, and similar epidemics periodically visited the town with only less devastating effect. Life on this Connecticut frontier was arduous long after the older towns on the Connecticut river or the seaboard had arrived at security and relative ease.

Yet the community went forward. As early as 1689 a minister, Jeremiah Peck of Greenwich, was settled in the town and supplied with a house and lot, a propriety of one hundred fifty pounds, and benefit of all divisions of land already made, together with a salary of sixty pounds—fifty pounds in provisions, ten pounds in firewood. Such a handsome salary was clear proof not only of the supreme importance of the church to the devout Puritan settlers but of their faith in their own capacity to maintain such a standard for their town even in its first struggling years. We must of course remember that money, hard coin, was not destined for another two generations to play any part in the every-day economy of any new settlement, and values of country produce, in which all men paid their taxes, were set from time to time in town meeting. So, even in 1724, wheat was rated at six shillings per bushel, rye at four shillings, Indian



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corn at the price agreed on when offered, and pork, "good and merchantable," at three pence per pound.

After Mr. Peck's death in 1699 Waterbury, because of Indian disturbances and "the deranged condition of the town," was unable to persuade a successor to take up residence here until 1705. But then John Southmayd came, and thereafter the town was never without a minister of the Gospel. The first meeting house was completed in 1702, built in part with the proceeds of sales of "wild"—that is, unbranded—horses. Meanwhile, in 1698, the town voted to set up a school for four months in the year and late in 1709 a committee was instructed to supervise the building of a schoolhouse. Sometimes school funds were not sufficient to employ a schoolmaster for more than three months, and the town eked out by hiring a "school dame" for a time.

By 1697 the first generation of proprietors recognized the wisdom of encouraging younger men to settle in the town. Accordingly they created "bachelor" privileges which entitled a young man upon coming of age to receive thirty acres of upland swamp and boggy meadow together with a house lot and four acres of pasture land, and a propriety in the common lands, provided that within four years he build a tenantable house not less than sixteen feet square. The bachelors were to have no voice in the granting of the undivided lands and might sell only such of their allotted lands as they had cleared and improved. The bachelor proprieties were to be rated at forty pounds in the later divisions of the commons. Four years later the proprietors decreed that a bachelor might acquire absolute title in his lands only after he had dwelt in the town five years after building his house. A number of sons of the first proprietors thus came into property of their own, and some men from other towns were also induced to settle here.

The workaday world of both men and women in the primitive little settlement we must imagine as best we can. Fields



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must be ploughed, planted, and harvested. Fences for cattle had to be built and maintained. Later only swine, when ringed in the nose, were allowed to roam the woods, recognized, as the town record in 1723 phrased it, as "Fellow Commoners with other creatures." There was hay to be cut in the meadows, wood to be brought in for winter fuel and for cooking the year round. Candle wood, knotty pine to burn for light when tallow for candles was scarce, had to be gathered, after each householder had marked his trees by peeling the pine and branding upon them his name. Pork and beef had to be salted down or smoked. Tallow, not only for candles but for soap, had to be boiled down. Candles had to be dipped and soap made with lye drawn off from wood ashes. When sheep-raising was introduced, men owning sheep must tend to shearing and scouring the wool to be turned over to the housewife to spin and weave into clothing or blankets. Neighbor of necessity helped neighbor.

Articles that could not be made at home had to be purchased with any surplus the householder could produce—foodstuffs, pipe or barrel staves, tar, hides, or possibly furs. But purchases had to be kept to a minimum, if only because of the difficulty of transporting to the seaboard or to Hartford and Connecticut river settlements any marketable goods. Significantly one of the earliest undertakings of the town after its incorporation was laying out a road to New Haven. The first generation of settlers on the Naugatuck had to be almost wholly self-sufficient.

## CHAPTER III

### *The Settlement of Judd's Meadows*

THE distribution of lands in this southern section of Waterbury began some twenty-five years before anyone built his home here. Some time before 1679 the Committee for Mattatuck voted a first division of the meadows downstream and probably allotted "Judd's Meadows" to William Judd at that time. Later the name was to be applied to the whole region and included the land of many other men. Certainly we find in an order of 1679 called "The Devistion to the Straits," a record that a partitioning took place, and each man, in order drawn by lot, had his choice of location. Ten lots were assigned north of the Town Plot at Buck's Meadow. All the rest lay within what is today Naugatuck, fourteen on the west side of the river, nine on the east side. While most of the plots contained about eight acres, the Committee occasionally "threw in" additional land to equalize allotments. Thus, because of its barrenness and likelihood of being heavily washed by floods, what was known for a hundred years as the "Deacon's Meadow," laid out for William Judd, was called eight and a half acres, but by actual measurement contained about twenty. The "Deacon's Meadow" lay on the west side of the river in the very heart of the present-day borough. (See Appendix I.) To the list of twenty-three men here recorded as the first individual landowners in Naugatuck a number of other names were added in various divisions after 1686. But not one of the first group made his home here. The labor of building up the new community fell to younger men.

As long as the owners continued to live in the town center, outlying lands like those at Judd's Meadows could only be used for pasturing cattle or cutting hay. Removal from



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Waterbury center was unthinkable until passable highways could be built. Survey of a road along the east side of the river from Waterbury to New Haven in 1686 made Judd's Meadows more accessible than formerly, but we cannot suppose that the highway was for years more than a rough track traversible by ox carts. Even after "a passage to Judd's Meadows" was laid out in 1699 the journey from the downstream meadows to the village must have been difficult.

It is surprising, therefore, that as early as 1696 several young men obviously contemplated building homes on lands in Judd's Meadows awarded them in that year, "provided they build and cohabit according to articles." Yet it was none of these men, but Samuel Hickox, Jr., the son of Sergeant Samuel Hickox, who first built his home here. In 1702 young Samuel erected a house on land adjacent to Hickox meadow and was promptly granted eight acres of land about the house. For, in keeping with frequent practice of the period, Samuel, Jr., had built his house before obtaining title to the land on which it stood. Two years later he exchanged with his brother Thomas his house and holdings in Waterbury center and elsewhere, in return for their deceased father's lands at Judd's Meadows. He then moved his family to the new home. The oldest son of one of the original proprietors of the town, Hickox was thirty-five years old when he established his wife and seven sons and daughters in Judd's Meadows. Here in September 1705 Gideon Hickox was born, the first English child born in the new settlement thus begun. One wonders whether, in moving so far from friends and neighbors, greater courage were not demanded of Elizabeth Plumb Hickox, Samuel's wife, than of her husband.

But at least one other family soon followed their example. By 1706 Daniel Warner had built his house on a plot just north of Hickox. Daniel Warner had been only twelve years old when his newly widowed mother, taking up her husband's proprietary rights in Mattatuck, established her family there. As the oldest child in the fatherless family



## SETTLEMENT OF JUDD'S MEADOWS

Daniel must have been inured to hard work, and it is perhaps not strange that when a man of nearly forty he chose to move his own family, wife and four children, to a new home. There may have been others also: the permission of the proprietors given in 1705 to "jud's meadow men" to set up a pound for their cattle suggests that other men as well had already taken up residence here. In 1709 a burying plot was set aside on land released by Hickox and the following year the proprietors granted Hickox "Liberty of that Stream called daniel warners Brock, from the East Side of the going over the sd Brook. Any place for Conveniency of Daming So Long as he Shall maintain A fulling mill and Conveniency of Land to pass and dry Cloth." In the light of these evidences of a community, it is hard to believe, absence of record notwithstanding, that before 1713 only two families resided in all Judd's Meadows.

The fulling mill which transformed Daniel Warner's brook into Fulling Mill brook is thought to have been a successor of one earlier set up on Great brook at Waterbury center, where Hickox himself may well have carried on the business. The process of scouring and shrinking the homespun cloth was known as fulling. Hickox operated the mill in Judd's Meadows till his death. The inventory of his estate valued the mill at forty shillings. It may have been the first enterprise of its kind in the colony and was certainly the first in the vicinity. But after Hickox' death one finds no reference to the mill until 1730.

The "Great Sickness" of 1713 carried off Samuel Hickox, his nineteen-year-old son, and Daniel Warner, leaving as the sole listed inhabitants of Judd's Meadows two widows, Ebenezer Hickox, not yet twenty-one, and twelve children, seven of them under eight years of age. How the two women and the three older boys contrived to tide their families over the next winter is hard to imagine. Yet in three years' time Ebenezer and John Hickox felt at liberty to build houses for themselves and turn over management of the homestead

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to their mother, twelve-year-old Gideon, and his sisters. The fate of the Warner children was settled by their mother's remarrying and removing to Woodbury. The widow Warner herself was a second wife; her predecessor, the mother of the four older children of Daniel, had been the first white person buried in Judd's Meadows.

In this pioneer settlement usually neither widow nor widower remained single long. A man needed a woman to take charge of his household and few women would willingly face raising fatherless children unaided. As elsewhere in early New England, men generally outlived their first wives and quickly remarried. But frequently women also were widowed, and then, like Mrs. Warner, married again. So the woman with stepchildren, her own children, any children of the first marriage of her new husband, and any now born to the two conducted a household as varied as a small village.

In 1713 another permanent settler had come to Judd's Meadows, although his choice of location on the west bank of the Naugatuck in these days before the river was bridged could give scant comfort to the Hickox and Warner households. Joseph Lewis, at the time of his first coming to Waterbury from Simsbury about 1700, had been the first newcomer to be accepted as an inhabitant by the close little corporation of the proprietors. Doubtless his being a weaver by profession ensured his welcome. Ten years after his marriage into the family of a grand proprietor he set up his household in Judd's Meadows in a house south of Towantic brook, west of the present Ward Street. Here he and his numerous family prospered. In 1722 a brother-in-law from Wallingford followed to buy land and settle in the neighborhood. As payment of a loan of four pounds, three shillings and sixpence to the town in settling a boundary dispute with Wallingford, Joseph Lewis acquired, in addition to his proprietary allotments, eighty acres of land and by 1734 was marked as the richest man in Judd's Meadows. Some years



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later, in acknowledgement of another unique service, he came into possession of still more property, when the son of Abraham Andruss deeded him two hundred fifty pounds in land for having assumed the care of young Andruss' widowed mother in the last years of her life. At Lewis' death in 1749 he owned some seven hundred acres, valued one hundred and forty years later at about \$50,000. So Lewistown had its beginning. Joseph Lewis, Jr., in 1728 built his house not far west in Towantic meadow, and his brother John in 1736 established himself in a house south of his father's.

In thumbing over the manuscripts of town and proprietors' records for the scanty entries about Joseph Lewis, the historian wonders how a humble weaver built up such a fortune. Did his wife bring him property? Did his weaving net him hard money and thus means to buy valuable land? The story runs that he and his sons put a large acreage into rye for export, probably to the West Indies. In farming for export, was he a daring innovator who had the Midas touch? Certainly good luck must have attended him at every turn, and his career marks one of the earliest success stories in the Naugatuck valley.

From 1713 on other bachelor proprietors came in increasing numbers. Within two decades there were homes in the meadows near Beacon Hill brook which the county road to New Haven made accessible, houses on the west side of the river near Hop brook, and the beginnings of settlements west of Joseph Lewis' along Towantic or Long Meadow brook, on Twelve Mile hill and Straits Mountain, and in the rich lands where "Gunntown" was to arise. While most of this growth stemmed from Waterbury itself, as its young men with bachelor accommodations moved their families to the outlying lands, some "outsiders" added their strength to the development of Judd's Meadows. In 1717 Hezekiah Rew of Milford and James Brown of New Haven purchased land of the Hickox brothers and came to live here not long after. Rew in time bought of Ebenezer Hickox the old fulling-mill



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site and operated a grist mill for a year or two, while Brown opened the first tavern in the vicinity.

So the Judd's Meadows pasture lands of the first generation of Waterbury planters became farms where men lived on their land. The proprietors' records after 1714 abound in entries noting permission granted to the inhabitants to relinquish lands acquired in earlier divisions in order to substitute acres contiguous to their homes, and exchange and sales of land further hastened the process of consolidating men's holdings into less broken units. Moreover, at about this time, despite the protests of a minority, the proprietors began to allot the undivided common lands in very much larger parcels than formerly, as much as one hundred acres to each original proprietor, often in plots of sixty acres or more. Thus concentration of land and wealth became possible.

But in spite of the wish of every man to have his farm in one piece about his home lot, up to the middle of the eighteenth century almost every proprietor had woodlots and pasture land scattered about in various sections of the town. Uncertain landmarks make it impossible to trace the location of each man's grants and purchases, and division of property among heirs of the first generation further complicate the picture. Let us look, therefore, only at the general distribution of inhabitants and endeavor to reconstruct their mode of life.

By 1740 there were thirty-one families living here. Several well-to-do householders from neighboring towns had bought land and moved into the southwestern portion of the region. So the sons of John Weed, hatter of Derby, established themselves on Twelve Mile hill and Straits mountain. Soon after the Osborn brothers came from New Haven, and Thomas Osborn, unabashed by the remoteness of Twelve Mile hill, built a house on the summit and made his home there for seventy years. What the old man at the end of his life could see from his mountain top must have been a sharp contrast





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to the view at his coming. Beyond his own four hundred and eighty acres of farms and woodland a whole village had grown up. In 1733 the first of the Gunn family, haling from Derby, bought land west of the present-day Millville where Nathaniel Gunn began to build up a large property. In 1739 he had built a sawmill on Long Meadow brook and in time developed several other water powers nearby. For the next thirty years the Gunn family bought more and more land, purchasing from the earlier settlers round about, until at the death of Nathaniel, Sr., in 1769 he owned eight hundred acres in "Gunntown" and had outstripped in affluence every other man in Judd's Meadows. In fact, so eager for power and prestige were the Gunns that one of the sons, hearing that the family was falling into second place as landowners, hastened to buy another farm and so re-established the family's importance. At the outbreak of the American Revolution Gunntown more nearly resembled an English manorial estate than any other settlement in the vicinity, and, while the sons of the first Nathaniel, like other Judd's Meadows men, farmed their lands with their own hands, their Tory convictions together with their wealth set them apart from most of their anti-British neighbors.

Other sections of Judd's Meadows prospered only less. At least three powers on Hop brook were early put to turning water wheels in a grist mill, a sawmill, and, probably at a somewhat later date, in a mill making small wooden wares. On the east side of the river near Fulling Mill brook a substantial community grew up before mid-century. The tavern set up by James Brown in the Ebenezer Hickox house must have brought in some hard cash, although "Bishop" Brown sold the property before long to the Terrill family who followed him as inn-keepers. Brown may have been too unpopular to succeed as a host, as his pomposity was a by-word and his Church of England affiliations, which earned him the label "Bishop," doubtless annoyed his Congregational neighbors. About 1735 Thomas Porter, son of the first phy-



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sician of Waterbury, left his large house in Waterbury center to build his home on land allotted his father in 1686. Here or close by about 1752 his son erected the house which, after the John Lewis house, is today the oldest house in Naugatuck. Thomas Porter's brother-in-law, James Baldwin, came about the same time, purchased the original Warner house, and almost at once acquired the Hickox mill on the brook. The mill was not the first building erected by Samuel Hickox for fulling cloth in 1710, but a new one put up by his son after 1730. Here Baldwin, a carpenter by trade, successfully operated a sawmill and a grist mill for some fifteen years until 1752 when he sold the mill properties together with two hundred acres of farm. Milling was obviously profitable. Before the Revolution the Hoadley family, one of the few old families whose name still is borne in Naugatuck, secured possession of the land and mills, and in a shop nearby Jude Hoadley in the 1770's was making spinning wheels.

Below the south branch of Fulling Mill brook on a great hill Stephen Hopkins, son of Waterbury's first miller, in the 1730's was established on a large farm. The exact date of his removal from Waterbury is uncertain; nor is it plain by what means he acquired so large a tract of land. His father had been an important citizen of Waterbury and for his services in maintaining the town's first corn mill had been given extensive grants. Yet it was unprecedented to have in the hands of one man a farm of 959 acres lying all in one piece. The farm stretched north and south over a mile and seven-eighths and at its greatest width was slightly over a mile wide. Part of it apparently was given to his wife by her father. In addition to this unbroken domain Stephen owned some forty acres near the mouth of Beacon Hill brook. On the summit of Hopkins hill a few rods east of the New Haven highway he built his home, probably about 1734, and raised a large family. Progenitor of a line of distinguished citizens, Stephen himself was a man of great influence in the valley. His farm was reputedly a model and he was for years one of

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the three largest taxpayers in Judd's Meadows. On the stream that flowed south through his farm into Beacon Hill brook he built a sawmill in 1734.

The development of the area near Beacon Hill brook, Indian Wecobemeas, lagged somewhat until after the Revolution. For all their accessibility to markets in New Haven, the farms here were far removed from Waterbury center and the meeting house, although after 1729 three roads through Judd's Meadows ran as far south as the brook. Still the water power of the brook was doubtless put to use in mid-century, at least for grinding meal and sawing wood.

The number of sawmills scattered along all the streams indicates that even the first houses were clapboarded, not built of logs, and it is reasonable to suppose that plank flooring rather than earth was usual. Mortar for chimneys was made from oyster shells brought from the Sound, while glass for windows was imported from the seaboard also. Every farm had a barn, for every taxpayer but one in the whole township as early as 1730 had at least one horse or a cow, and most men owned oxen and swine as well. If the farm wife did not raise chickens or geese and turkeys, her family could still count on eating wild game every fall, when it was a simple matter to decoy birds from the great flocks of wild geese and pigeons that darkened the sky in their flights southward. Orchards surrounded many of the early houses, and every man had a few sugar maples to tap in the spring. In summer wild blackberries and blueberries could be had for the picking. By mid-eighteenth century, though life in Judd's Meadows was not easy, neither did it lack substantial comfort.

As elsewhere in the New England settlements of two hundred years ago, the householders had to provide their clothing and simple household goods from materials made at home. Hides prepared by the local tanner in Waterbury were kept for the day when the itinerant cobbler made his visit. Ordinarily the shoemaker came twice a year to each



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farm and stayed long enough to make boots for every member of the family. Children and grown-ups alike had to make their shoes last until the cobbler came again. Spinning wheels, for making yarn to knit into heavy stockings, were universal, and each little girl in the family had, as a matter of course, her daily stint of knitting to do. While the most well-to-do might employ the services of a weaver like Joseph Lewis, more generally every housewife wove some homespun for her own household on the heavy wooden loom at home; the cloth was then dressed at the fulling mill and returned to the housewife to make into clothing. Later in the century itinerant weavers and tailors appeared who, like the cobbler, moved from house to house making clothes for each family.

A school for Judd's Meadows was a necessity long before 1750. The schoolhouse of 1709 in Waterbury was too far away to serve for the children of this outlying district, and their fathers, therefore, in 1730 persuaded the town to divide the funds derived from lease of school lands. Seven years later, by town vote school at Judd's Meadows was to be kept for six weeks, with seven pupils in attendance. When in 1749 Waterbury created four separate school districts, Judd's Meadows was expected to provide fifteen scholars for its school. Teachers apparently went from one district to the next, boarding for a month or six weeks in each. Presumably for some years the schoolmaster met his pupils in one home or another in Judd's Meadows, until a schoolhouse was built on what is today the corner of May and High Streets. How children living on the west side of the river before 1753 attended school is a mystery. After the bridge across the Naugatuck was built in that year travel, of course, became easier.

Difficulties of communication indeed were enormous all through the eighteenth century. The need of a bridge at Judd's Meadows was so clear that in 1753 Waterbury allotted "one hundred pounds old tenor" to assist in its build-

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ing, but at the same time exacted bond of well-to-do men of the neighborhood to guarantee that the town should not be put to further expense for either building or maintaining the bridge. The "Bridge account at Judd's Meadows" notes that eighty meals of victuals for the watermen at sixpence each were charged up, and a number of gallons of rum as well. Unhappily the "watermen" were unable to build a bridge strong enough to withstand the ice of winter and floods of spring. By 1759 the Naugatuck was once again bridgeless and the town was obliged to offer Thomas Porter five pounds to complete a new one.

Meanwhile every Sunday of the year, over ice and through deep snow, mud, or dust and heat, the families of Judd's Meadows must get themselves to Waterbury center for meeting. Carriages were still an unknown luxury, and probably no family owned horses enough to furnish man, wife, and every child with mounts. Perhaps farm carts were harnessed up for the trip, or, more likely, the children trudged on foot while their father rode horseback with their mother behind on a pillion. Arrived in the center, they looked forward to a long morning service in an unheated meeting house, unheated, not because comfort was thought sinful, but because of the danger of fire. In midwinter footstoves filled with hot coals brought from home could just barely ward off chilblains. After the morning service came an equally long, equally cold afternoon service. To ease the rigors of such a day, which belief in the glory of God and consolation of worship could only partly mitigate, the town in 1743 accorded permission to householders living at a distance from the center "to build Sabbath day Houses, of setting them in the highway against the Sandy Hollow." Here families that could afford Sabbath Day houses ate their luncheons, and, after thawing out around the open fires, refilled the footwarmers for the afternoon service.

The Waterbury Society, like her neighbors, was stirred in the 1740's by the "Great Awakening," that wave of re-



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ligious excitement that swept all New England. Launched partly by the fiery sermons of Jonathan Edwards who made his hearers sweat in an agony of terror of eternal damnation, the revival of faith preached by the "New Lights" made itself felt in every meeting house in Connecticut. Converts were accepted as "having come to Christ" after merely announcing their passing from distress of spirit to great joy and delight. The new preachers, the forerunners of a long line before Billy Sunday and Aimee McPherson, moved from town to town encouraging laymen, as lively zealous Christians, to speak out "With all the air and assurance of ministerial authority exhorting although altogether unequal to the solemn undertaking." The dismay the self-contained older generation of Puritans felt at the crying out in meeting and the wholesale conversions, in response to a tongue-lashing emotional appeal, caused violent dissensions in many societies. In Waterbury the town constable felt obliged to interfere in meetings he considered extremely boisterous and disorderly. The new young pastor of the Waterbury Society was himself a sympathizer with the new order, and for a time was suspended from the pulpit for his unorthodoxy.

While Stephen Hopkins of Judd's Meadows was among the fervent believers in the "New Light," his neighbors, the Gunns and Osborns, were bringing their influence to bear in the opposite direction, namely, the recognition of an Anglican community. Whether or not reaction from the comparative extravagance of some of the converts of the "Great Awakening" strengthened the Episcopal position, it was at this juncture that the Waterbury Society saw fit to permit the Anglican families to break away and build their own church. It was consecrated in 1743 as St. John's. But whatever their church ties, all men in the town in these days were sustained by their belief in God's watchfulness over them.

Faith in the Lord's loving care for His own was never more needed than in the summer of 1749. In spite of the

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steady growth of the valley, marked by increase in population and improvement of the land, Judd's Meadows together with all Waterbury suffered severely that year. Unprecedented drought withered the crops in the fields and the hay in the meadows. No rain fell until July 6 and the cattle, "poor, lowing things," wandered in search of food where nothing green was to be seen. One hundred pounds of hay sold for three pounds, ten shillings, about \$18, and the barley and oat crops gave at most only seed. The next spring butter cost seven shillings, sixpence, nearly \$2 a pound, at a time when the purchasing power of money was many times what it is today. In midsummer came a visitation of a "Remarkable and Sore Sickness," which made many whole families incapable of helping themselves in the least degree. In the town's petition to the General Assembly of the colony for abatement of taxes the extent of the disaster is vividly described. Few households escaped untouched, and many families lost three and four of their members. It was impossible to tend the fields, as most of the able-bodied in every family "from the middle of Harvest to the last of September" were busy nursing the sick. What name modern medicine would give the epidemic is unknown; inaccuracy of description of symptoms makes translation into twentieth century terminology impossible. Perhaps it was a return of the "distemper" which had swept the countryside in 1713. We only know that the afflicted ran a low, nervous fever and, if they survived the ninth day, usually recovered. Town bills presented by persons caring for their stricken neighbors mounted enormously and, while the town was forgiven its county tax, it received no school money for the year.

God-fearing and often kindly though these people unquestionably were, they also showed at times an uncompromising severity that startles us today who are taught to look upon the helpless as a public responsibility. Free charity was not considered an act of virtue, and men demanded payment in full for services rendered others. The charges sub-



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mitted by Waterbury for assistance given strangers during the "Great Sickness" omit no least item. Particularly harsh in the modern view was the treatment given the orphaned son of Joseph Lewis, Jr. The thirteen-year-old boy, whose father and grandfather died in the epidemic within a few days of each other, was accused of having picked corn in a field and building a fire to roast the ears on the Sabbath Day. For this crime he was publicly whipped and in consequence lost his reason. Yet several years later the admittedly witless young man was tried for the theft of a small sum of money, heavily fined, and again "whipped on the naked body ten stripes," and then bound out as a servant to the plaintiff until the fine was paid off. He never regained control of his inheritance, a considerable tract of valuable land in Judd's Meadows, but he was allowed to serve as a soldier in the Revolutionary War!

A single exception to the rule that every man pay in full for any help given him or his family occurs in the will of Stephen Hopkins, probated in 1769. Whether his was an unusually kindly nature or whether grief at the death of three of his children within a week's time had softened the sternness of the old Puritan, Stephen departed from custom in setting aside from the estate willed to his children twenty pounds to be "in bank for the use and benefit of the poor in the town of Waterbury." The selectmen, trustees of this gift, were limited only by the request that the annual income never be "perverted for the use of such poor as are slothful, vicious or unwholesome members of the society," but be given only "to such as are in the full communion in the regular orthodox churches in the town. . . ."

Of sharper effect than the "Great Sickness" upon the growth of the community was the constant removal of families to other towns. Other men purchased the land and set themselves up in the places of their predecessors, but the departure of old neighbors and the coming of new disrupted somewhat the steady development of the region. While the

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great exodus to Ohio and other western lands beyond the Appalachians took place after the Revolution and in the early years of the nineteenth century, long before that we find recurring notices of families selling their lands here in order to take up residence elsewhere. A series of new names appeared in the town list.

Some of the meadowland of the intervalles of the river, to be sure, were inexhaustibly fertile and so readily adaptable to farming. But a glance at a topographical map shows instantly that much of the terrain was too hilly, too rocky, to be cultivated without enormous effort. The men who stayed on or moved into the Naugatuck valley were men for whom farming had less interest than development of the water power of the mountain streams flowing into the river. Already a process of natural selection was starting whereby the farmers were being sifted out from the tinkers, the craftsmen, and the mechanically gifted, so that the settlers of Judd's Meadows and other sections of Waterbury township by the 1770's were beginning to be marked for their mechanical ingenuity. Sawmills, grist mills, and the small shops where water-driven wheels turned out a variety of household wares were owned by men who were farmers still, inasmuch as every household had to be as nearly self-sustaining as possible. But the emphasis was ready to shift from the farm to the shop.



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PART II

*The Day of Yankee Notions*





## CHAPTER IV

### *The Salem Society*

FOR two generations after the first settlers made their homes in Judd's Meadows, the people of the region loyally supported the church in Waterbury center, and made the uncomfortable trip to meeting every Sunday, rain or shine. Even the greatly improved roads of the 1760's and the bridges over the Naugatuck river left the weekly journey an undertaking which only conviction plus custom could have made tolerable. But in the fall of 1765 Judd's Meadows had a sufficient population to encourage its inhabitants to seek a "winter privilege," permitting them to have from the first of December to the end of March a service held nearer home. The General Assembly of the colony granted the request for a period of three years and at the end of that time renewed the privilege for an indefinite period. Nathan Hale, among others, was invited to preach for a time in Judd's Meadows. The convenience of the winter privilege soon overcame any scruples about deserting the first church of Waterbury, and in 1772 Judd's Meadows' men petitioned to have a separate Society set off with all its attendant rights of self-government. The winter parish in 1767 could claim nearly a third of the taxable property of all Waterbury, so that, while it was evident that withdrawal of that much support from the church in the center must leave it greatly weakened, it was also plain that Judd's Meadows could well afford to maintain the year round its own ministry. The new ecclesiastical Society was accordingly created in 1773 under the name of the Salem Society. Somewhat later all the region included came to be called Salem Bridge and the name Judd's Meadows ceased to be used.

The Salem Society for a number of years was unable to

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induce a minister to accept a call to the new parish, and the pulpit was filled temporarily by one pastor after another. In fact, of the sixty-three years of the existence of the Salem church, in only thirty-nine was there a settled minister. But during the troubled years of the Revolution the Society made no attempt to draw up a Covenant. It was in 1781 that sixteen men and women were formally organized into a church. Heading the list of members was the first white man born in Judd's Meadows, Gideon Hickox, now a man of seventy-five. Upon his land the meeting house was built, completed in 1782.

Among the bills presented for building the meeting house two survive which give a fair idea of how the job was done:—

May, 1782, for work done towards the Meeting-House since the two-penny Rate.

For going to Goshen for a lode of clapboards.

For carting timber a day.

For a day to West Haven to get shells.

For carting a load of shells and paid for them.

For two days making pins (for the frame).

For my cart to cart stones a day, by Philip.

December 20, 1782—Paid twenty pounds toward the Meeting-House which was my signment.

Beside what I found raising.

June 17, 1782. Things that I provided for the Raising of the Meeting-House and Steeple.

For a Barrel of Sider.

For a Bushel of Ingen Meal.

For a Half a Bushel of Malt.

About nine pounds of salt pork.

About thirty pounds of fresh pork.

For two the best sheep I had.

Somewhat over two years later, the first Thanksgiving Day was celebrated in the new meeting house. In January 1785, the first settled pastor, the Reverend Abraham Fowler, was



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ordained and installed over a church now grown from sixteen to thirty-one members. Here he and his successors conducted services for the next forty-six years. The bell in the steeple rang out for Sunday meeting and other public gatherings held in the building, and tolled the curfew at nine o'clock every night of the week except Saturday.

In 1769 the Waterbury Society had voted the drastic innovation of permitting men to share pews with their wives in meeting. Before that time the Waterbury church had adhered to the Congregational custom, established in the earliest days of Separatism, of seating men on one side of the meeting house, women on the other, with children at the back or in the gallery. Possibly the first Puritans believed that each individual's responsibility for his own conduct was thereby heightened; or perhaps, since direction of the Christian commonwealth was the duty of the "Brothers" only, it seemed but proper for them to be seated in dignity apart from the "Sisters" and children. But inasmuch as the Salem church showed every sign of being far more rigid in its Puritanism than the parent society in Waterbury, it is not unlikely that Salem reverted to the scheme of segregation in seating the congregation in the first meeting house.

The Confession of Faith was an elaborate statement both of doctrine and of concepts of church governance. (See Appendix III.) Stress upon the place of God's Elect in the cosmos and their duty to the Lord led the church to exclude from communion members of neighboring churches vouched for only by "letters recommendatory," "as many of the churches do not hold that credible profession of real Friendship to Christ and holiness of heart are necessary in Order to Persons being admitted to full Communion with them, & as there are many church Members in this Land both unsound in Doctrine, and immoral in their lives. . . ." Of such persons Salem wanted none. The pastor was to be acknowledged as going before the Brethren in all things, "no less in Matters of Discipline, than in Doctrine, Faith, and

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Practice, and that acting in this line the Brotherhood are to know him as over them, and obey, and submit to him in the Lord, but he hath no right to make Laws or prescribe Rules of his own, or to put a Negative of the Church in any case unless in matters merely official. . . .”

The strict Calvinism of the Salem church went so far as to demand of its members public confession of any breach of Gospel Rule and the guilty could only be restored to church fellowship by vote of the congregation. Although this inquisitional ruling was not invoked in the early years of the church when its membership was still small, Salem relied upon the church rather than upon civil authority to regulate public affairs. Brethren were exhorted to settle their quarrels not by recourse to law but by appeal to the Brotherhood in meeting. For the Christian church, ordained of God, the fountain head of all justice, must be the mainspring of a well-ordered community.

Notwithstanding the vigorous convictions of the orthodox Congregationalists, and in spite of their patent distaste for anything British, there was no sign of objection in 1786 to the organization of an Episcopal church here. Doubtless the Salem Society felt it was losing nothing, as the adherents of the Church of England were mostly families in Guntown who had always attended St. John's in Waterbury after its establishment a generation before. The fourteen members of the new parish, St. Michael's, met in one private house or another until a building was erected in 1803. Once a month an ordained Anglican minister lent by a neighboring parish conducted services; other Sundays a lay-reader served. By the turn of the century, the antagonisms aroused sixty-odd years earlier by the episcopacy of "Bishop" Brown, the tavern-keeper, had largely disappeared, and in the course of the nineteenth century St. Michael's was, indeed, to become the rather more fashionable church of Salem.

While both church societies relied upon pastors' sermons and reading of Scripture to supply food for thought day by



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day, at an astonishingly early date men in Salem exhibited a hunger for wider knowledge that led to the formation of the Salem Library. In 1783 some twenty-eight men organized a proprietary library with the express design of promoting "useful knowledge." It was one of the very first library associations in Connecticut, and, if not a public institution with free access for everyone thirsting for book-learning, it still marked a serious endeavor to furnish in the community means of extending its horizons through books. The twelve-shilling membership fee was high enough to bar some householders from admission and, moreover, every member of the company had to subscribe to the twenty-five articles of organization, rules which were explicit and drastic enough to exclude anyone considered by his neighbors undesirable in tastes or influence. The proprietors, therefore, by no means included in their company all members of the Salem Society. The articles even stipulated conditions of bequeathing the rights of a proprietor to his heirs. That the enterprise was regarded as a solemn and responsible undertaking is shown by the requirement that the librarian and treasurer, as proof of their financial and moral rectitude, each give the committee a five-hundred-pound bond, a fabulous sum for eighteenth-century Salem. Thus safeguarded by the articles and the high cost of membership, the library embarked upon a career of over fifty years.

The books which the committee purchased and permitted members to hold for a two-month period were, as was to be expected in the eighteenth century, largely dissertations on religion. But a few volumes of travel and history also found their way into the list, and in the nineteenth century some fiction was added. Though proprietors were subject to severe fine for lending a book to anyone not a member of the company, we may assume that this rule was not vigorously enforced and that a good many residents of Salem profited by the library without having to be admitted to membership. In the absence of school libraries or any but a very few text

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books, the Library Association performed a valuable service to all Salem.

In reviewing the obligations of the Salem Society itself, it is important to remember that before the separation of church and state in Connecticut an ecclesiastical society had civil, as well as religious, functions. By law, regardless of church membership, all inhabitants living within the limits of a legally incorporated ecclesiastical society were to constitute a school committee which must meet at least once a year. Judd's Meadows, to be sure, had had its own school since 1731. A record of the early 1770's, kept by Samuel Lewis, lists school receipts and expenditures: "to Daniel Warner for keeping school at Judd's Meadows £1, 10 s. March 1771"; "to Olive Upson for keeping school 13 s. 4 d., April 1771,"—evidence that then, as now, the schoolmaster was better paid than the schoolmistress. In 1785 an eighteen-year-old girl, as her son, Persis Smith, long afterward related, taught here for ninety cents a week, investing proudly her summer's earnings in six yards of calico costing ninety-six cents a yard to make her first fine dress.

With the forming of a separate society Salem organized its own school committee, voted local taxes, five pence to the pound, and appointed a local collector of the "rate." The next year residents of Gunntown petitioned for a separate school and so the South West School District was created. Soon after the schoolhouse was erected near the western limits of Gunntown. Four other districts were similarly set off before the end of the century, east of the river in 1778 the Middle School District, which included sections of Milford and Derby, and in 1790 the Pond Hill District; and west of the river in 1778 and 1779 the Lewistown and Partridgetown Districts.

From later descriptions we can picture fairly clearly what the schoolhouses before 1800 were like. The small one-room building, roughly clapboarded outside but lathed and



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plastered within, was lighted by two windows on each of the long sides. At one end, or at each end, was a huge fireplace where a wood fire kept the temperature above freezing, but scarcely warmer in midwinter. Boys took turns in keeping the wood boxes filled and starting the fire before school began in the morning. Their fathers sometimes paid their school taxes by supplying wood, chestnut, oak, or walnut for the winter's fuel supply. Along the walls on three sides of the schoolroom stood backless wooden benches, while a shelf nailed to the walls about three feet from the floor served as a desk for the older boys and girls. For recitation periods the older scholars swung their legs over the bench to face the room and used the edge of the shelf as a backrest. Younger children were seated in the center of the room on wooden slabs, the rounded surface downward, supported by four legs set in augur holes. These "seats" without backs were all of a height, frequently so high that the five- and six-year-olds could not touch the floor with their feet. No wonder they spent hours "busy" keeping still. Just inside the door facing the schoolchildren stood the teacher's table presided over by the schoolmaster, lately himself a farm boy of the neighborhood, or by the school-dame, often a girl of not over seventeen or eighteen only recently through with her own schooling.

Contrary to the current conception of eighteenth-century school supplies, in Salem slates and slate pencils did not come into general use till about 1820. Before that time dark-colored paper, or perhaps occasionally birch bark, was meted out to the children for their writing exercises. An old book for beginners in writing states:

Necessary implements are a penknife, quills, paper, good and free ink, likewise a flat ruler for sureness; and a round one for dispatch; with a leden Plummert or Pencil to rule lines; also gum sandrich powder with a little cotton dipped therein, which rub gently over the paper to make it bear ink the better.

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Certainly teacher and children both regarded penmanship as a fine art to be cultivated with infinite pains, and the letters and records of the day usually are models of orthography. Children learned to read from the Bible, the Psalter, and Benjamin Harris's *New England Primer*. With the introduction of Noah Webster's *Speller* in 1783 spelling became a regular part of schooling, and spelling bees, for grownups as well as children, became popular. The result is noticeable in the disappearance of the quaint and infinitely varied phonetic transcriptions of earlier records. Arithmetic, the third "R," was the only other subject taught. Congress's adoption of dollars and cents, in place of British pounds and pence, involved modification of earlier arithmetic texts, although many farmer-storekeepers' accounts continued to keep the old style reckoning. In 1788 Nicholas Pike of Newburyport, Massachusetts, published an arithmetic which was widely used until Root's *Introduction to Arithmetic* appeared in 1796. Pike's book contained "A Perpetual Almanac," and the proportions and tonnage of Noah's Ark. Most boys and girls proceeded only through division, with a brief exposure to "vulgar" fractions, and anyone who ciphered through "Old Pike" earned the reputation of being a "great arithmeticker."

Beside these church and school affairs the Salem Society probably had direction of some few other local matters, supervision of highways within its limits, maintenance of the bridge over the Naugatuck river, and the appointment of Daniel Warner as gravedigger. This doubtless was the same Daniel who taught school in Judd's Meadows. But upon whatever concerned the township as a whole the town at meeting in Waterbury center continued to pass.

Salem Society had thus to begin its home rule at the very time that the American colonies were taking their stand against British Parliament and King. Waterbury as a whole was strongly anti-British, and the sturdy Puritan views of most of Salem suggest warm support of the American cause.



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While we may assume that the townspeople collaborated in non-importation from Great Britain and the other preliminary measures of protest, it was not until 1774 that Waterbury voted in town meeting to follow explicitly the recommendation of the Association of the General Congress by appointing a committee to observe the conduct of persons suspected of being hostile to the colonies' cause. From the Salem Society Captain Gideon Hotchkiss and John Lewis were the committee, and we may be sure that the Gunn and Wooster families and others were promptly recognized and "contemned" as enemies of American liberty. At the end of November 1774, a town committee, John Hopkins and Samuel Lewis for Salem, undertook to collect contributions for the relief of the poor in Boston, cut off by the Boston Port bill from food supplies ordinarily landed in the port. How generously Salem responded to the appeal no record tells, but as the proportion of "meeting-house people" to Church of England supporters was eighty-two to nine, it seems logical to suppose that Salem gave its share.

In military support Waterbury outdid her neighbors. In 1775, ranking as the twelfth town of the colony in point of wealth, she sent off one hundred and fifty-two men, more than any other town in Connecticut except Farmington. The young men from Salem's jurisdiction cannot all be identified, but some twenty-seven are known to have served at one time or another with the troops from Connecticut in the course of the next seven years. Headstones in the old Pine Hill cemetery mark the resting place of several of these men, but of their lives as soldiers and citizens no significant facts have survived.

During the colonial wars against the French and Indians Judd's Meadows had seen some of her men march off, never to return. But until the 1770's this relatively remote region was little involved in British empire-building strategy. By the time of the Revolution the northern part of Waterbury had a good east-and-west road leading from Hartford toward

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the Hudson and Fishkill, the southernmost highway from New England to the west to be safe from British battleships in the Sound. Over this road through northern Waterbury Continental soldiers moved back and forth at fairly frequent intervals. But Salem, lying several miles to the south, had few direct contacts with the Army and only once, in 1777, do we hear of troops quartering here for the night at the inn established in the Porter homestead. Husbands and sons who set off with any one of the Waterbury companies were equipped from home with makeshift uniforms and blankets, and usually each man had his own musket. But the families then left at home had scant notion of their men's doings unless a chance courier brought a letter or until, at the end of their enlistments, the men themselves straggled back. Salem was neither more nor less patriotic than her neighbors, and only a handful of her men, turned soldiers, served more than a few months at a stretch.

The only dramatic local episode of the war occurred a short time after the Declaration of Independence. In 1776 Long Island and western Connecticut offered many opportunities for illicit trade or looting expeditions which could be undertaken in the guise of punitive patriotic raids by either Sons of Liberty or Tories. So when rumor reached Gunntown that a Long Island merchant, suspected of smuggling property of both British and Americans, had removed a store of valuables to Bethany, young Tories here were inspired to raid his house to carry off the "stolen" property. Perhaps the expedition into Bethany and the violent, though bloodless, appropriation of the merchant's stores would have passed off successfully had the small Gunntown band not been thrust into the role of kidnappers. As the half-dozen young men of Salem were returning through Judd's Meadows with their loot on the night of the raid, they came face to face with young Chauncey Judd, son of a staunchly patriotic family. Sixteen-year-old Chauncey had been at a quilting bee in the neighborhood and, having squired home one



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of the young women at the party, had lingered on in her kitchen till a late hour. The appearance of anyone on the road at midnight in Judd's Meadows took the raiders by surprise. The boy tried to persuade his captors that he would not raise hue and cry against them if they would let him go unmolested, but, as he had recognized the local youths, the leader of the group, a professional soldier, refused to hear of so risky a course. So Chauncey was carried off. The small band spent the night in Jobamah Gunn's barn and the next day stopped at David Wooster's, where Chauncey for safe-keeping was hidden in the old well until the party was ready to move on.

But the boy's disappearance together with the news of the robbery in Bethany had roused the country-side by now, and vigorous pursuit began. Five days later Chauncey's brothers and other Judd's Meadows patriots caught up with the kidnapers and the boy was returned home. Local indignation ran high, and the young Woosters were heavily fined and sentenced to four years in the Newgate copper-mine prison. The older men in Gunntown who had connived with the kidnapers suffered sharply too. Chauncey's father sued David Wooster, Sr., Jobamah Gunn, and others for the boy's abduction and mistreatment, and the damages awarded him were heavy enough to ruin the Woosters utterly. The story goes that in paying his fine to the Judd family, Jobamah Gunn, clad as always in the black knee breeches and white stockings befitting a British gentleman, brought out from his house the 800 pounds in silver coin, carried in his beaver hat.

Such happenings naturally inflamed the ardor of American patriots in the vicinity so that we wonder that the Gunns and other British sympathizers were able to weather through the later years of the Revolution in Salem. Nevertheless, the Tory families did not remove, and the Gunns survived as wealthy landowners for another generation.

Yet in spite of waves of strong anti-British sentiment in the community, there is no positive evidence of Waterbury's

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being affected by the events of these troubled years. Farmers with surpluses of cattle or grain doubtless made profitable deals with Continental or Connecticut commissaries, and probably the local blacksmith drove a thriving business in mending harness and shoeing horses for army wagoners and couriers. But the impetus usually given by war to industry and raising of food stuffs left no sharp permanent mark. The town of 1783 seems little different in character from that of 1775. Certainly Salem showed no change of historic significance. The tax list of 1782 names only one man, Irijah Terrill, as shopkeeper or trader. One blacksmith, one wheel-maker, two tanners and shoemakers, two tavern-keepers, and two mill-owners comprised the rest of the list of men in Salem whose special properties, or "faculties," were assessed. Soldiers returned from the war to resume life as farmers and makers of small household necessities, or, disabled and ill, soon to die and to be buried in the town burying plot. All Waterbury rejoiced in peace and guardedly welcomed the ratification of the Constitution. But so far as the historian today can detect, Salem's everyday life went on undeterred by political wrangling in the world beyond the Naugatuck valley, neither hampered nor benefited by changes in the larger American economy.



## CHAPTER V

### *The Emergence of the Small Shops*

**A**FTER the Revolution the people of Salem, like Americans everywhere, faced an accumulated shortage of all manufactured articles. But unlike the situation occurring nearly two centuries later after both World Wars, in the 1780's there was little money to buy with. Formerly the farmers of this region had been able to purchase English or foreign manufactured goods from merchants in New Haven, bartering rye, hay, apples, or dairy produce for the articles which country people could not make at home. But now that Connecticut and the other new American states were excluded from the special trading privileges of the British Empire, many manufactured wares badly wanted for farm and household use could be bought only at prices out of reach of the up-country farmers. In the Naugatuck valley, however, even before Alexander Hamilton submitted his famous *Report on Manufactures*, a number of men began to see the possibility of meeting their own most urgent needs by adding to farming the making of household goods and farm tools both for home use and for exchange with the outside world.

The water power and considerable mechanical skill were already here. Men had operated grist mills and sawmills on the mountain streams from the earliest days of Waterbury's settlement; flour for bread and lumber for houses and barns were primary necessities. Small undershot waterwheels, easily installed, harnessed the power of the brooks tributary to the Naugatuck, freeing the planters from the need of depending on mills in Farmington, Wallingford, or New Haven; and before the first generation of Waterbury proprietors had relinquished control to younger men, they had established besides sawmills and a corn mill at least two

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blacksmith shops and a fulling mill for cloth. In these shops and others started later in the eighteenth century Waterbury men acquired the skills which after the Revolution were gradually to transform the valley into a manufacturing region.

The first pioneers had brought with them axes and scythes of English manufacture, and these were handed down as priceless possessions from father to son for generations. Yet the role of the blacksmith was from the very beginning of the community one of the most important. The local smiths, though unable to make fine edged tools, had still turned out many lesser items essential to life on this New England frontier. Thomas "Smith" Judd and his successors in the village smithies early produced plough shares, harness buckles, nails, kettles, and other household utensils from the iron ores of western Connecticut, while their neighbors, using the wood from the heavily timbered hillsides, made rakes, trenchers, and crude furniture. Though metal-working on any considerable scale was not developed hereabouts before 1800, the smiths acquired a valuable knowledge of working the Connecticut iron and copper ores which was to form a sound basis for later industry.

By 1790 Salem, apart from Waterbury center, had four sawmills of her own, a grist mill, Jude Hoadley's cabinet shop for making spinning wheels and small wooden wares, the Gunn iron furnace on Long Meadow brook, a small establishment for carding wool, a cooper shop, and Jared Byington's smithy and nail factory. With the exception of the smithy, these shops supplied local necessities only, without furnishing a surplus for selling beyond the valley. The nail-maker alone made his wares in quantity large enough to market outside the neighborhood.

Jared Byington was in fact Salem's first manufacturer. Stubborn and hard-headed as his own nails, his character was manifestly not one to endear him to his neighbors; his quarrels with his brethren in the church, his suit for slander, and



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finally his excommunication for adultery, as we shall see later on, show him as an irascible, possibly even a mean, man.

But his pertinacity and his mechanical gifts enabled him to build up an industry which outstripped in volume of business all the earlier undertakings in Salem and which was profitable not only to himself but to the community as well. The second man in Connecticut to receive a patent from the United States, he used his nailing-cutting machine and a later patented device for heading nails to turn out his wares in quantity. While he himself and his sons worked in the smithy, at the end of the century he employed on the job of nail-heading six other men in his foundry, a large number for the shop of those days. His pig iron, like the ore for the Gunn furnace on Long Meadow brook, was unquestionably bought from the mines in Salisbury, Connecticut, and carted over the hills by ox team to his shop on Fulling Mill brook. In 1801 Byington sold the blacksmith shop—though apparently not his foundry across the road—to a group of men for button manufacture. Years later his sons revived the nail factory for a time, but by then their father's contributions to Salem's industrial beginnings had been largely forgotten. He died in obscurity without achieving recognition for the part his inventiveness and organizing capacity had played in his community.

Byington, by running a farm as well as his shop, set another useful precedent for a long succession of Salem shop-owners after him. Whether or not he originated the scheme of hiring boys in the neighborhood to work his farm in order to release him for work in his smithy, certainly later shop-owners evolved a full-blown system of cheap boy-labor to tend their cattle, plant their fields and gardens, help mow the hay, and load feed, butter, or apples on carts to be driven to New Haven to market. As late as 1853 for four dollars a month John Hopkins employed eleven-year-old Henry Baldwin to do much of the hard work on his farm, while Nathan-

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iel Carroll, the carriage-maker, was regarded by the boys he hired to do his farm-work as a kind of Simon Legree because of the long hours of heavy work he demanded in return for meagre pay. Only in haying season were the shops closed down in order to turn every able-bodied boy and man in the country-side into the hayfields.

Thus the town all through the nineteenth century was in some measure a farming area, and the most mechanically-minded men in Salem owned farms upon which their families lived. Down to nearly 1890 for most households farming and manufacturing were supplementary. Alternate means of earning a living stabilized the community and, particularly in the early years of the century, saved the manufacturer, struggling for a start, from the worst effects of recurring business depressions. The farm was always there to fall back on. If water to turn the mill wheels failed for some weeks, if temporarily the cost of raw materials exceeded the means of the shopowner, or if market possibilities seemed uncertain, the enterpriser could simply cease to run his shop. The hired hands could find farmwork nearby, and the shopowner and his sons spent the interlude in cutting additional supplies of wood, cultivating their fields with their own hands, and living on the land without cost other than hard physical labor until the moment came when resumption of manufacturing should be profitable. Capital outlay for the shop was small enough so that suspension of operations was relatively inexpensive. But because the men of the valley were by natural inclination and gifts more mechanics than farmers, the shops almost always reopened and men, joyfully accepting the challenge of the workbench, resumed their "tinkering."

While Jared Byington, the first man in Salem to produce on a scale to mark him truly a manufacturer, turned out metal wares as a natural outgrowth of his profession of blacksmith, the men who followed him in the next forty years had no such directing background. What then led them to make



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“Yankee notions”? Almost any household goods that they could have manufactured cheaply and transported to the backcountry the farmers of remote villages would have bought eagerly. But difficulty of transport limited the Salem manufacturers and determined what they could make profitably. For “notions” most of the raw materials were available in the neighborhood—Salisbury iron and Newgate copper, wood, wool, and hides from the farms of the Naugatuck valley itself. Furthermore, marketing finished articles light in weight and small in bulk presented none of the problems imposed by shipping heavier manufactures. At a time when the roads were still so impassable that a man on horseback could not count on covering in a day more than a short distance, this was an important consideration. In 1780 country people regarded ten miles a good day’s journey, and forty years later only travel by the main turnpikes under ideal conditions guaranteed as much as fifty. So it was that “Yankee notions” became the manufacturing mainstay of the region, things which demanded some skill or experience to manufacture but which were small and light in weight and could be carried by peddlers either afoot or ahorseback. Heavy articles ran the risk of costing more to deliver than the traffic could bear.

Moreover, none of the Salem farmers hankering to start a manufacturing enterprise on the mountain streams had much liquid capital to begin with. Armsmakers like Eli Whitney of New Haven, Simeon North of Berlin and Middletown, and Asa Waters of Millbury, Massachusetts, were aided by government subsidies. But the small shopowners of western Connecticut, the clockmakers, the iron-founders, the tanners, the wheelrights and blacksmiths, had to finance their own undertakings, counting upon their own ingenuity to make well-constructed articles that could be sold at prices to fit the purses of an eager but impecunious public. Hence it was sound instinct which led the mechanics of this region to devote their skills to manufactures which demanded small

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capital outlay for materials and tools, which could be packed by peddlers to the backcountry and which, by their very essential nature, could be laid aside for a time to be marketed profitably the following year if hard times in the country made any given moment unpropitious for a deal. As late as 1845, when many Salem shops had existed for thirty years or more, \$1,000 constituted the average capital invested.

The term "Yankee notions," which smacks today of a shadowy, unimaginable past, had very definite connotation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Sometimes now associated with the apocryphal wooden nutmeg, Connecticut notions meant small household articles, singly inexpensive yet wholly indispensable—needles, pins, buttons, buckles, combs, eyelets and later hooks and eyes, pen knives, shears, mousetraps, forks and spoons, pans, kettles, and occasionally clocks. Since these were wares needed in every backwoods settlement, their marketing was surest by house to house peddling; and the "packmen" who brought their goods to remote farms and villages usually expected payment by exchange. Beside bed and board to the peddler, the up-country housewife might offer worn-out copper pans and kettles, salvageable for the metal, rags for paper-making, skins from her sons' winter trapping, homespun woolens or linens, and some hard money. The peddler must have been at times puzzled about how to drive his bargain advantageously and still be able to carry away on his back whatever he accepted in payment. A young man who engaged himself to market the notions for the Salem or Waterbury makers had to be both shrewd of mind and vigorous of body, for his pack, slung over his back, was loaded to capacity and topped perhaps by a mantle clock, while from his belt he might suspend a kind of saddle bag jammed with smaller items. On his return trip the cumbersome kettles or worn-out stills, the bulky rags, pelts, or fabrics made his journey still more laborious. Horse-drawn two-wheeled buck boards or carts naturally superseded the peddler on



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foot or horseback as soon as the roads were good enough to carry a vehicle to the remote villages where the peddler was most welcomed.

But the drawbacks notwithstanding, the Yankee peddler at the beginning of the nineteenth century was a universally recognized force in American commerce. Later in carrying goods over into the Ohio valley he generally used pack horses, or, if an independent trader, a wagon. But in the early years the packmen who set out every year from the Naugatuck valley laden with "Yankee notions" evidently most often went afoot, covering in their journeys western New England, upper New York State, and sometimes Pennsylvania and some regions of the southern states. Timothy Dwight, in writing of the Connecticut peddlers before 1815, describes their trips as covering an extensive geographical area over a period of six to eight months every year, but suggests that they frequently returned to the shop from which they were sent to turn in what they had collected and to pick up new loads of notions.

No account book, journal, or diary survives today to give any direct clue either to the Salem shops' arrangements with the packmen or to the routes these first "drummers" traversed. In search of the most profitable fields of vending, the peddlers from Salem probably headed west over the Straitsville Turnpike toward Litchfield and thence south, west, and north. Selling to the big cities was via a jobber in New Haven, readily reached by cart from the Naugatuck valley. In Salem itself the general stores, where householders bought sugar, molasses, or luxuries like tea and calico, never sold locally made goods over the counter, for the neighbor wishing buttons or a whip or a hoe went straight to the shop where the article was produced.

The first shopowners were primarily hand craftsmen, rather than manufacturers in the modern sense, and few possessed many power-driven tools. Judge Hoadley, the cabinet maker, late in the eighteenth century ran a footlathe for

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turning his wooden rolling pins and bowls, and Jared Byington's patented nail machines and trip hammer made his shop a model. But otherwise before 1808 all the finishing and much of the preliminary work in Salem shops was done by hand. Thereafter power-run machines, however crude, multiplied, and the purchasers of Byington's smithy found it worth while to construct a flume half a mile long to supply their new button factory with power. Eventually the button makers probably copied the English machinery that Waterbury manufacturers had installed. But meanwhile, as men in Salem shops gained experience, they began to devise their own shortcuts in methods of fabrication. Various labor-saving machines must have been built to use the water power of Fulling Mill and Beacon Hill brooks, though, when the inventors failed to apply for patents, knowledge of how their machines operated has been lost.

A number of Salem men did, however, patent their ideas. So Martin Stevens, one of the first fork-makers in the neighborhood, patented his method of tempering forks and developed a business before 1815 which employed twenty men. Amasa Goodyear, father of Charles of rubber fame, and for a short time a partner of Stevens, took out several patents, particularly notable, a special process for making round-tined forks. Other Goodyear inventions which he made in Salem included an enclosed oil-burning lantern and a special spring steel hay fork. The producer of the first pearl buttons made in America, Goodyear at a later date worked out with Austin Smith and his son, Asahel Smith, a successful method of making bright metal buttons. A mixture of copper, tin and spelter was poured into metal button molds in each of which was placed a wire shank with an eye to sew through. The buttons when cast were polished on a lathe to give the bright finish desired by tailors who used them on swallow-tail coats. In 1838 Asahel Smith, in a shop higher up Fulling Mill brook, introduced a new process for manufacturing



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bone buttons. Power-driven saws sliced the ivory nuts and a hand lathe then drilled out the buttons.

To "Yankee ingenuity" is often attributed all the advances in mechanics and manufacturing in America in the pre-Civil War era. Every part of New England—and, in fact, many sections of the Middle States also—shared in developing the machines, machine tools, and shortcuts in methods of manufacture that overcame the handicap of insufficient manpower. Men of the Naugatuck valley played their part in this drama of industrialization. In the latter part of the nineteenth century Naugatuck contributed some distinguished enterprises. But before 1844 the shops here were small, production was limited, and the men who were the brains behind the most prosperous concerns were little known outside the neighborhood.

What kind of men were these first manufacturers? Unquestionably they were endowed with some of that indefinable Yankee ingenuity which is glibly supposed to explain the early industrial progress of this country. This same inventiveness directed at making life more comfortable and labor easier has frequently astonished other peoples in American soldiers overseas. Whether New Englanders, Southerners, or Westerners, these Americans displayed the gift, fostered in this country, which led American boys to convert old gasoline cans and odds and ends of piping into shower baths in the jungle, or to make radios and victrolas out of cast-off military equipment. The forerunners of these makeshift inventors, and the predecessors of the engagingly adaptable Peterkin family of the 1870's, the Salem mechanics applied their improvising talents in their shops.

That making goods instead of raising crops was their first interest is proved by the number of men who spent years of their lives at one manufacturing venture after another. We have evidence that they were makers of things rather than makers of money, for few of the shopowners of the early

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nineteenth century were consistently successful, and most of them faced sharp financial reverses, if not utter failure as manufacturers, at some period of their careers. In the twenty years between 1836 and 1856, Henry Baldwin, writing in 1885 of his boyhood memories, declared, every shopowner in Naugatuck faced months when he could not pay his help and often teetered on the ragged edge of bankruptcy. Shops passed from owner to owner, usually shifting product with the change in ownership, with a frequency that is at once surprising and confusing.

For example, Jesse Wooster, with Loren Isbell as partner, began drawing wire at Baptist Meeting House Corner on Fulling Mill brook about 1825, moved his operations to Platts Mills in Waterbury, dissolved that partnership and entered into another to make clocks on Hop brook, moved this work to Rubber Avenue, shifted to manufacture of cast and horn buttons, and ended in 1842 making german silver combs. Meanwhile Isbell continued in the Fulling Mill brook shop but switched his product to bone buttons. Such versatility was the rule rather than the exception.

But the very diversity of articles made over the years suggests a pertinacity in the character of the men running the establishments, a persistent faith that, if changing tastes or needs eliminated the profit in one item, another could be found which the shop could successfully produce. Mechanical aptitude, confidence in the ultimate triumph of hard work, and readiness to adapt their business on a small scale to an altering pattern of life are the outstanding traits of these earliest shopowners. They had skill; they had courage; they had interest in their creations; they had sons or sons-in-law to give help in the shops; and they had their farms to depend on in case of financial disaster. In families like the Isbells, the Smiths, the Warners, and the Hines, sons worked alongside their fathers or uncles, and, when the older generation withdrew, carried on, perhaps in a new location, a slightly altered line.



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As Jared Byington showed Salem farmers how local resources could be turned to manufacturing, so it was probably the Grilley brothers who inspired the first shopowners on Fulling Mill brook to make buttons their specialty. Henry Grilley of Waterbury in 1790 had persuaded an English workman to divulge to him the formula British shops used to cast and finish pewter buttons; and soon afterwards with his brothers, Silas and Samuel, Henry opened a small factory in Waterbury center where they carried on business for over a decade. In 1802 Silas Grilley joined the firm of Abel Porter & Company, the predecessor of the famous Scovill Manufacturing Company, in which he participated for about five years until he sold out his interest and moved his activities to Fulling Mill brook. There in a tiny shop on the South branch he resumed metal button-making. Several years earlier a group of six or seven men of the neighborhood, apparently impressed at the profitable future the Grilley enterprise seemed to offer, had organized the New Haven and Baltimore Company, bought of Jared Byington the site of his smithy, and built their button factory just east of the old Hickox grist mill. They did not begin manufacturing until 1808, perhaps because they did not have money enough to equip the shop after building the long flume from the dam half a mile upstream. But once started, the partners, or some of them, continued operations for nearly twenty-five years, providing experience to the men working there and, by the busyness of the plant, encouraging other men to venture into the field.

One hundred and fifty years later the buttons made in these first American shops were to become collectors' items, a special treasure trove for the antique fancier. But in 1800, before men had learned to make and seamstresses to use hooks and eyes, snaps, or zippers, buttons were an essential part of dress. The convenience of buttons and buttonholes, in place of the ties and lacings of the Middle Ages, in turn was to be overshadowed by the utility of concealed metal fasten-

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ers. But before the Civil War buttons served not only as fasteners but also often as decoration—wooden or bone buttons for workclothes and underwear, brass or silver for dress coats and uniforms. Makers in Waterbury elaborated designs for their finest metal buttons, sometimes turning out commemorative sets, such as the beautiful gold ones presented to Lafayette in 1824 on his second visit to this country, or the Log Cabin buttons produced in 1840 in honor of President Harrison. So the button-maker was both manufacturer and craftsman, combining in his products utility with artistry.

By 1825 six new button shops had sprung up along the upper reaches of Fulling Mill brook. Even the eighteenth century grist mill was converted for a time to button-making. Wooden buttons, tin buttons, lacquered buttons, buttons of brass, mother-of-pearl, bone, ivory, vegetable ivory, and later cloth-covered and silk-bound buttons—all had their day. Some makers bought their material from Waterbury brass founders; Anson Smith got the ivory and bone for his products by teaming over the hills from Meriden comb factories pieces of ivory and bone too small for combs; manufacturers of wooden buttons used the wood of the laurel and ivy bushes covering the hillsides near the stream. Only two of these eight shops continued button-making into mid-century, and neither employed any great number of hands. But it was buttons that launched the men of the Fulling Mill brook region upon their manufacturing careers. Once the dams, flumes, and water wheels were built, even destruction of the shops by fire could not discourage the owners. When they rebuilt or remodelled the factories, they frequently turned to other lines. But not until steam power made the brook's water power inadequate were the wheels on Fulling Mill brook to cease turning.

The fever of button-making never spread in comparable degree to other sections of Salem, although Milo Hine made buttons in his Straitsville shop before he embarked on hoe-manufacture, and one other shop on Beacon Hill brook was



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started in 1828. When in 1824 Silas Grilley and Chauncey Lewis acquired the water privilege for "as long as grass grows or water runs" and built the first dam to use the power of the Naugatuck river itself, they began on button-making. But they soon sold shop and power rights to Sylvester Clark, the clockmaker. At a later date Jesse Wooster as a side line made some metal buttons in Naugatuck center.

Only less important than the button manufacturers in making Salem's wares known beyond the Naugatuck valley were the clockmakers. Clocks bearing the makers' names—Bradley and Austin, Straitsville; Spence and Wooster, Salem; Sylvester Clark; or R. Ward—for years were peddled by packmen through western Connecticut and New York State, and because of their excellent time-keeping, early established a fine reputation for Salem clocks. The oldest clocks, twenty-four-hour time-pieces, had wooden works, the later eight-day clocks brass works. All were of the weight-driven type. Especially valued for the various original improvements in the works were Sylvester Clark's shelf clocks, which he turned out in numbers before 1835. Below Long Meadow brook near the river stood the Ward shop, little more than a shed on the edge of the Ward farm. Richard Ward and his sons, alone of all the Salem clockmakers, carried on their clock-making into the 1840's when machine-turned gears made unprofitable hand-made works. Until then Richard's sons, Lewis and Lauren, peddled the Ward clocks through the Connecticut hills. Subsidiary to clock manufacture was the painting of clock faces and stamping out of metal hands, both jobs done in the neighborhood.

Table forks were another of the Yankee notions for which Salem earned a name, won chiefly after 1813 by Martin Stevens' tempered forks and slightly later by Amasa Goodyear's round-tined steel forks. The Goodyears, father and son, deviated from the Salem system of selling through peddlers by opening a store in Philadelphia in 1826 where Charles had established contacts as a younger man serving

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an apprenticeship to Rogers & Company, the Britannia-ware makers. Charles marketed his father's manufactures through this first general hardware store in America. Unfortunately accumulating debts induced Charles to release the goodwill and patent rights to the steel fork business, and so his father was obliged to turn to other lines.

Meanwhile other Salem shops were producing for the peddlers' packs mousetraps, tin pans and kitchen utensils, small brass castings, metal eyelets, and pocketbooks. Elihu Benham had a substantial tannery on Beacon Hill brook as early as 1808, and rawhide whip and pocketbook manufacture naturally followed. Several men were making pocketbooks before 1830. About 1840 one enterprising man started a shear shop on Beacon Hill brook, and a year later Lyman Bradley and George Beecher undertook on a small scale manufacture of pocket knives in an old building at the west end of the bridge in the village center. For this venture Bradley brought over from Sheffield, England, the first foreign workmen to come to Salem. A generation later cutlery was to be one of Naugatuck's most successful industries.

But Yankee notions by no means covered all the manufacturing interests of Salem, as many men, sensing the ready market for heavier wares in the immediate neighborhood, gradually ventured into other fields of industry. On and off from the turn of the century onward one man or another made wool-carding machines, small hand-operated ones for home use or, later, larger power-driven ones for factories. So Edwin Scott about 1801 made cards and carded wool near the mouth of Fulling Mill brook; and forty years later Clark Warner and Loren Isbell converted the old grist mill into a machine shop to turn out both carding machines and castings. In 1835, John Tatlow, a newcomer to Salem, bought the Sylvester Clark clock shop across the river and began building cards and looms. Though attempts before 1830 to produce linseed oil and paper in Straitsville proved abortive, and though wire-drawing, the sure market in Water-



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bury notwithstanding, was early abandoned, manufacture of agricultural implements from 1822 onward grew steadily in importance. For nearly twenty-five years Eben Tuttle forged hoes in Straitsville and finished them in his shop just over the Prospect line, until his business grew so large that he moved to a big factory on Fulling Mill brook. Milo Hine of Straitsville also ran a busy shop, equipped with a trip hammer and manned by six to ten employees. Before 1840 Hine's hoes and pitchforks commanded a good market among the farmers roundabout. Near the site of Hine's shop one Colonel Albert Sperry launched a totally new enterprise in 1839, a malleable iron foundry, the second in the United States. Some six years later the plant burned down and when rebuilt apparently operated on a smaller scale. But the experience gained here by Sperry's iron-workers was to be a great asset to Naugatuck when in the 1850's the Tuttle family revived the industry.

Beside the men who from mid-eighteenth century on made wares or performed services largely for their near neighbors—the men sawing shingles and heavy lumber, the two coopers making barrels, the wagon-maker, the shoemakers, the millers and the owners of cider presses—there were the textile manufacturers. Of all the early industries in the community the woolen mill on Long Meadow brook had a longer history than any other one enterprise. Transfers in ownership and management, expansion and contraction, change in type of fabrics made, burning of buildings and erection of new—all these ups and downs failed altogether to eliminate the industry for over one hundred years. Some time before 1812 a small "clothier" shop had been built along the brook on what is now Rubber Avenue, and here in 1813 Leverett Candee, possessed of a shop equipped "with fulling mill-Kettles—Shearing Machine—press papers—Iron screw and bar, Also Tender bars near said shop," began making wool cloth. In 1820 Candee took William DeForest into partnership and for two years the two men ran

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the mill together. DeForest kept his interest until his failure in 1846, but Candee's half interest was transferred several times between 1822 and 1825, when the name William DeForest & Company was adopted.

For the next twenty years DeForest assumed responsibility for management of the mill, bought additional land, secured more water power, and erected new mill buildings. The finishing shop at the lower end of the brook was supplied with power by diversion of the Naugatuck river from above the dam built by Grilley and Lewis in that first experiment in use of the main stream. DeForest added satinet manufacture to his line of woolens, probably in the thirties after the cotton factory in Cotton Hollow provided a local source of cotton warp. Satinet, a cheap fabric made by pressing wool fibers into cotton cloth, had a great vogue for some years, but its lack of wearing qualities doomed its makers to trouble as soon as more substantial materials could be bought at low prices. Certainly satinet manufacture did not prosper and in 1846 DeForest & Company collapsed in bankruptcy, reportedly with a heavier indebtedness than any firm in New Haven County had ever piled up before.

Still DeForest's enterprise was notable as the first of a new kind in Salem. Textile mills required numerous hands and Massachusetts mill-owners had established the tradition of employing girls gathered together from the countryside round about. Following the example of Francis Lowell and the Waltham cotton spinners, DeForest built a boarding house where the young women working in his mill could be housed and supervised. Here was a departure from local custom which was not repeated until in the 1850's one of the more prosperous button shops on Fulling Mill brook followed suit. There is no indication that DeForest's scheme caused any stir in the community, but it served to indicate that the village was soon to be caught up in a more strictly industrial mode of life than had obtained in the first years of the nineteenth century.



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With the building of Milo Lewis' cotton factory in Cotton Hollow in 1833 the new order of things was accentuated. Milo Lewis, small of stature, wiry, with a thatch of reddish hair that always stood on end, was a figure of boundless energy. Labelled the first "shrewd business man" of Salem, Lewis appeared to be interested in making money as well as cotton warps. Doubtless informed of the profits Massachusetts cotton mills were accumulating in the 1830's, Lewis determined to use the power at the mouth of Beacon Hill brook to turn cotton spindles and create a fortune. The two-story, red-painted factory was topped by a belltower whence at 6 o'clock every morning the bell sounded the beginning of the long day's work. Like most shops in the township, the mill was later destroyed by fire, but not before it had subtly contributed to changing somewhat the pattern of industrial life here.

Varying DeForest's scheme, Lewis boarded his help in the neighborhood at rates set for women at \$1.25, for men at \$1.50 or \$1.75 a week. Whether the differential was determined by appetite or rank in the mill is hard to tell. With his male employees he entered into formal contract when he engaged them. Typical is the following:

This agreement made and entered into this 5th day of February 1841 between Joel Andrus on the first part and Milo Lewis on the 2d Part witnesseth—

That said Andrus agrees on his part to work for said Lewis in his cotton mill Two years, from the first day of April 1841 to the first day of April 1843. Said Andrus agrees to tend the Picker and take care of the Picking room in Said Lewis Mill as directed by Sd. Lewis or his overseer. Said Andrus is to conduct himself in a Gentlemanly manner toward Sd Lewis & his overseer and all persons in any way connected with the Cotton Mill and is to perform all his duties faithfully especially the oiling of any part of the gear or Machinery that may be committed to his care & is to studdy to make himself useful to his employer by an attentive dilligent habit of business and endeavour to excell in the department of

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Picking. Also Sd Andrus agrees to Ring the Bell and make the fires for the space of time above mentioned at such times as the Regulations of the Mill require. Further Said Andrus agrees to use his influence in favor of said Mill and the maintenance of all the Rules and use his influence to promote the same course of conduct in others connected with sd Mill—and also to pay a Respectful Regard to the Sabbath by the habitual attendance on some place of public worship. Sd Andrus also agrees that in case the business should make it necessary he will quit the picking room for some other department of the business that may be assigned him by Sd Lewis or his overseer, and should it so happen that said Lewis should be obliged to stop his work at the Mill on account of misfortune or hard times this contract is to be null and void.

Said Lewis on his second part agrees to pay to Sd Andrus for the faithful performance of all the duties as above described for the space of two years from the 1st day of April 1841 the sum of Nine Dollars a month—Eight Dollars a month for the first year from April 1st 1841 to April 1st 1842 and Ten Dollars a month for the second year or from April 1st 1842 to April 1st 1843.

Signed day & date as above

Milo Lewis

as witness our hands for

Sam'l J. Lewis

Joel Andrus

Where \$120 a year was looked upon as an adequate wage for an experienced workman, we can comprehend that \$20,000, the owner's capital investment listed in 1845, was an enormous sum. It is also easy to see that the wages paid to the eight men and fifteen women employed at this time were a small item compared to the \$23,500 estimated as the value of the product manufactured annually. Admitted that interest rates were high, how, with reasonably shrewd purchase of raw cotton and a little adroitness in marketing his warps, Lewis was able to accumulate a fortune becomes no mystery. Still in any appraisal of the first industrialists of those days it is essential to realize that without the capital that Lewis and others were so successful in building up the



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later developments of the community must have been greatly delayed. Money was ready to invest in new enterprise when the time was ripe. Without it Naugatuck's evolution might have been different.

A few months before the Salem Society petitioned to be set off from Waterbury as a separate town, an event occurred in DeForest's finishing shop which more than any other single episode was to affect the course of the town's history. In the summer of 1843 Charles Goodyear, formerly for many years a resident of this place, begged his brother-in-law, William DeForest, to let Goodyear demonstrate the feasibility of using vulcanized rubber for shoes. Four years before this time the inventor had proved to himself the soundness of his vulcanizing process, but he had been unable to convince other people to the point of investing money in its development, although DeForest had given him some financial backing. The appeal to DeForest brought together in the woolen shop office Milo Lewis, Samuel J. Lewis, both also related to Goodyear by marriage, and Thomas Elliott of New Haven. Supplied with a shoe form and pieces of rubber, Goodyear's seventeen-year-old daughter before the eyes of the curious onlookers put together a rubber shoe. This was then vulcanized. Exposure to heat and cold neither softened nor cracked the rubber. Impressed, perhaps in spite of themselves, the witnesses concluded that here was an article worth investing in.

In September Goodyear accordingly issued to Samuel J. Lewis & Company, the forerunner of The Goodyear's Metallic Rubber Shoe Company, license to make rubber footwear under his vulcanizing patent, and manufacture began that same month. Some twenty-nine men and women started operations in rooms provided by DeForest. Townspeople in 1843 could not know that here was the industry that later would make Naugatuck one of the foremost rubber towns in the United States. It was the confidence of this

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handful of business leaders in the rightness of their judgment that launched an undertaking of immense importance to both Naugatuck and the world.

Plants like Milo Lewis' cotton mill built near the Naugatuck river we might suppose would ship in raw materials and dispatch their finished goods by boat. But navigation of the river was too interrupted by rapids to compete with transport by team over the well-kept turnpikes. The Straitsville Turnpike Company, organized in 1797 to run regular stages from New Haven to Litchfield by way of Straitsville, through Salem, across the ford of the Naugatuck river below Union City, and thence on over the hills to the west, by 1801 was in command of such a volume of traffic that Waterbury, in alarm, anticipated relegation to an unimportant up-country settlement. To counter this situation in 1801 the Waterbury Turnpike Company organized and built a fine road southward from the center along the east bank of the river to connect with the Straitsville turnpike in Salem. This new highway benefited not only Waterbury proper but Salem as well. Straitsville gained more than other sections and gave evidence in the early years of the century of maintaining her lead as a commercial center. Though the coming of the railroad in 1849 was to destroy Straitsville's prosperity and condemn it to insignificance, before that time the village was the scene of great activity. The Collins tavern, completed in 1811, was a commodious inn, furnished with a tap-room and four great ovens to prepare food for the constant stream of travelers. Out of deference to American enthusiasm for things French in this period before the War of 1812, when LaFayette's memory was still fresh and any enemy of Great Britain was a friend of America, Ahira Collins, the proprietor, set up his sign to read "Collins Hotel," using the French word *Hotel* instead of the older English label, *tavern* or inn. Across the road a bowling alley stood and after 1834 Collins put up a general store, kept well-supplied from merchants in New Haven. Large horsesheds nearby permitted the stage-



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driver to water and feed or change his horses for the trip ahead.

Meanwhile as early as 1804 Chauncey Lewis of Salem center seized the opportunity to exploit a location on the turnpike by erecting a tavern just east of the ford which crossed the Naugatuck. He built on land deeded by his father-in-law, Irijah Terrill, himself the owner of an old inn nearby. Chauncey Lewis, moreover, obtained from the selectmen of Waterbury permission to put up horsesheds on town property across the turnpike, for in 1805 the townspeople regarded a well-run tavern and stage-way-stop a true public service. The thrill of watching the stagecoach roll up to the inn door, discharge its passengers, and take on new was part of every small boy's treasured experiences in those days. By racing down the hill from the schoolhouse every afternoon the boys might be just in time to see the steaming, powerful horses dash up and, soon after, dragging the heavy stage behind them, splash through the shallows of the river and away westward. Not even the arrival of the first steam cars years later gave such pleasure. Early in the century the stages rarely used the wooden bridge over the Naugatuck.

A long series of hotel-keepers succeeded Lewis, each in turn keeping up the reputation of the inn as a good place to stop. A large hall covering the whole width of the building occupied the upper story and here for three generations most of the town's important social affairs were celebrated. The long career of the hotel on Main Street overshadowed in time that of any other inn. Yet Daniel Beecher's Tavern west of the river also enjoyed considerable patronage and the Beecher place, not far from the toll gate on the turnpike, served as an inn until 1834.

While the taverns with their stagecoach travelers kept Salem in touch with the outside world, it was the general store that served as the local news exchange, where neighbors picked up and passed on local gossip or discussed more seriously political affairs of town and nation. Though, as

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elsewhere in small New England communities, stores were few, there was one general store in each part of Salem which supplied its own neighborhood not only with news and brief sociability but with articles which householders could not make at home or obtain from the factories nearby. The storekeeper sold anything from fancy drygoods to brooms or any special delicacies like tea or coffee, frequently making his deal by barter. For the storekeeper before 1844 was farmer or shopowner as well as merchant, and his books often read of five pounds of sugar sold in exchange for two bushels of rye or two days' work haying. He ran his accounts for such long periods that one wonders today how he ever knew whether or not he was solvent. Indeed, the first general stores, the one in Gunntown, the Culver store east of the river near the bridge, the Straitsville and Union City stores, were run more as conveniences than for money-making, and volume business was no special objective. Salem had no aspirations to being a trading center. Farming and manufacturing enterprises consumed all her economic energies.



## CHAPTER VI

### *Every-day Life in Salem Bridge, 1800-1844*

WHILE men in Salem were developing the water powers and effecting the changes in the economic status of the community just described, life in most other respects went on much as it had before 1800. The principal disruption to the even tenor of work, worship, and occasional social neighborhood gatherings grew out of the restlessness which led a number of families to migrate to the west. The Congregational church records tell the story in part: "dismissions" to New York State or to Ohio or to places unnamed—though probably to the newly opened lands of the Northwest Territory—multiply until the Society was badly weakened. Between 1800 and 1830, ninety-eight members removed from the town, a very considerable loss to the church which in 1829 had only one hundred and fifty signers of the Covenant. Besides twenty-two the date of whose departure is not listed, twenty-seven persons left in the first decade of the century, twenty-five in the second, twenty-seven in the third. Whether Episcopalians, Baptists, and Methodists removed in proportionate numbers we can but guess. The Baptists, organized about 1817, disappeared as a church entirely in the course of a few years; only the name "Baptist Meeting House Corner" on Fulling Mill brook, remained. The Methodists were too few to have their own church or a settled minister before 1849. But certainly the families, of whatever denomination, who pulled up stakes were the less well-to-do of Salem, or at least those whose interests lay in farming, not in tinkering in a shop.

Even in the 1820's the trip over the mountains was not easy, though the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 doubtless simplified the journey for householders who could afford to

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ship themselves and their belongings west by canal boat. Contemporary descriptions must have been widely read in Salem, as elsewhere, and comments on the advantages or drawbacks of emigration were awaited eagerly. Obviously many people felt alarm for the future of Connecticut if the exodus of energetic men and women were to continue indefinitely. A number of letters and verses exposing the false hopes of the emigrants were circulated throughout the state in the early twenties in endeavor to check the flood. For example, *The Connecticut Emigrant*, published in Hartford in 1822, set forth in verse an argument between Henry and Mary, husband and wife, and Hezekiah and Hepzibah, father and mother, over the wisdom of removing to Ohio, a "dialogue" which ends in Henry's decision to stay to enjoy the known benefits of life in Connecticut. But such appeals were too late or too unconvincing to keep many householders in New England. In 1782 Connecticut had nine towns with a population of 6,000 or more; by 1820 only New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport claimed over 5,000 inhabitants. From the unfertile hillsides of the Naugatuck valley families continued to move to seek the richer lands of the Ohio valley, leaving their cousins and neighbors to cut the woodlands and harness the power of the mountain brooks, to develop an industrial society uncongenial to the farmer.

The streams of departing families inevitably cast a shadow upon those left behind. The Congregational church by adding new members succeeded for some years in keeping its congregation at about a level, but there lacked the steady growth that the accessions of the first years promised. Doubtless other factors than the drawing off of young men and women to the new settlements in the west contributed to the decline in the vigor of the Society. Indeed the course of affairs within the church had been troubled ever since the dismissal of its first pastor in 1799. Complaints brought to the attention of the church against the unchristian or disorderly



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conduct of several "Brothers" and "Sisters" caused ill-feeling, even though excommunications were rare. That the financial standing of the church was suffering is shown by the request for dismissal presented by Pastor Dodd in 1817 in which he protested the inadequacy of support given him and pleaded necessity of looking to his future. The church was obliged to let him go and for the next six years was without a settled minister. And in 1831 so "low and languid" was "the state of religion among us" that the church appointed a committee to visit every member to exhort all "to make a unrighted effort to awake from her slumbers . . . . to be more faithful and watchful, Endeavoring to stir up each others missions in the social and personal duties which we are in Covenant bound to perform." The day of fasting and prayer, held soon after, further to arouse the church, was marked by a morning session in which the male members proceeded "to confess their faults to each other—a most interesting season." One hundred years later Buchmanites were to find the same kind of release in public self-abasement. But it was 1834 before the awakened members succeeded in again establishing a settled pastor.

Still, the years of discouragement notwithstanding, the Congregational church was by no means without importance in the life of Salem. Though the pressure brought upon individuals to conform to an exacting pattern of behavior was sometimes resented, unquestionably the admonitions of the elders, the pastor, or the whole righteous body of the church was a powerful influence in the town. Nearly one hundred and fifty years later it is hard to recapture imaginatively the spirit that animated the Congregational community. The moral obligation upon the brethren to watch over one another was not lightly undertaken.

For example, when in 1801 Brother Jared Byington, the town blacksmith and nail manufacturer, accused Brother Samuel Scott of slander, the whole Society debated the rights and wrongs of the matter for months. Special meetings of

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deliberation were called, not only on Sundays after the morning "lecture," but on weekdays as well. When we remember that every man in this hard-working village began his day's work at dawn and expected to labor till dark in either shop or field, we can realize that it was not merely appetite for gossip that impelled the brethren. At length Brother Byington succeeded in having a "Consociation" of the neighboring churches called to pass upon the case. And for two days seventeen representatives from nine churches in New Haven County listened to evidence, held "conversation," and prayed for guidance before giving their verdict. Brother Scott, admonished to make complete public confession of his grievously unchristian conduct, submitted a statement which must have required moral courage to offer. As an example of the kind of public humiliation demanded of an erring brother, I quote it in full:

October 1, 1801

I Samuel Scott, acknowledge, before God and this church, that some days after my making a public confession before the church, for abusive treatment of brother Byington, I did in an unbrotherly manner, go to New Haven & there procure a writing from under the hand of Mr. Edwards, tending greatly to the injury of the character of said Brother; which paper I showed to a number of Gentlemen, contrary to all rules of brotherly love. And that by my conduct and influence, said paper fell into the hands of the grand jury, & of consequence, it became more public, & did eventually involve Brother Byington in a civil prosecution, both injurious to his character, and detrimental to his temporal interest. My conduct in this affair strongly calls into question the sincerity of my late confession, has greatly dishonored God, brot much trouble and blame on this church, and wounded my own reputation; and that notwithstanding my great offense against God and men, I have for a long time persisted in my wickedness, and refused to do honor to God and justice to my brother by a free and penitent confession of my fault. I have therefore great occasion of shame and sorrow, and deeply do bewail and confess my sin and shame before God and my brethren. In view of my



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criminal conduct in these respects, I humbly ask the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ, the forgiveness of my brethren of this church, and particularly of my brother Byington, whom I have so exceedingly injured, and of all men to whom a knowledge of my offences has come; and I promise for the future, by the grace of God assisting me, to watch and guard against all such conduct, and to treat my brother Byington, with candor and brotherly affection. On these reflections and this humiliation, I beg to be restored to the charity and kind treatment of this church, of my brother Byington, and all whom I have offended.

The Consociation then rebuked the Salem church for having been slow to act upon Brother Byington's complaint, but also urged that outraged brother to consider his conduct and return to his duty. A year later Brother Byington and Sister Elizabeth Lewis were excommunicated for breach of the seventh commandment. The shock of such distressful doings led the church in 1802 to appoint three men to act as ruling elders "to watch over the brethren and to attend to all matters . . . disciplinable." This duty the elders thenceforward pursued with zeal, and rash was the brother who dared risk their censure.

What did excommunication mean in those days? Being cut off from fellowship with the church, denial of communion, and perhaps loss of right to Christian burial, if unrepentant at death—all this was a mighty penalty. On the other hand, now that the Congregational church no longer embraced the whole community, excommunications could not extend beyond these spiritual punishments. While forfeiture of the respect of one's neighbors must have cut deep at a time when contacts outside the narrow river valley were few, a man did not necessarily suffer in his worldly estate. And there were ways out. So Brother Byington and others later excommunicated from the Congregational church defied their judges and made their peace with God by joining the Episcopal church. Conversely outcast Anglicans from time to time were accepted by the Congregationalists or Baptists.

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But the Church of Christ in Salem did not confine itself to disciplining erring members. It undertook also to establish safeguards against temptation. For full measure in observing the Sabbath, both Saturday evening and Sunday evening were decreed part of the Lord's day when neither "secular labor" nor "secular visits" were permissible. Use of "ardent spirits" except as medicine was decried. And in 1815 the church declared "that an attendance on dancing assemblies is inconsistent with the standing and welfare of baptized persons and the good order of Christian families." Could dancing assemblies have been introduced by Episcopalians or persons of no religious creed? That the Congregational Society saw fit to condemn this "practice" suggests that many of its young people must have been indulging in the pastime. Not long after the imposition of this restraint, to strengthen the Society's hold upon the younger generation, the church opened a Sabbath School. The children were brought together every Sunday from eight in the morning until the intermission of service at mid-day, and for encouragement to attendance, the church undertook to furnish "all such as regularly attended . . . with the Coleman Caticms if at their own expense." In spite of the niggardly-seeming character of this overture, in view of the scarcity of books, children of the parish found the parish library, opened somewhat later, a considerable inducement to keeping a connection with the Sabbath School. The Salem Juvenile Library, an adjunct of the older Salem Library, could not begin to satisfy the demand for children's reading matter.

By the 1830's, however, the Congregationalists realized that the church had outgrown some of the severities of its first Covenant. Accordingly they adopted in 1833 a much milder Covenant which departed so far from the older Calvinistic creed of the "Elect" as to state that nothing but "criminal selfishness and unbelief" hindered any person from coming to God. The congregation, forming itself into a mission society, began to give heed to the state of religion



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outside Salem, and the church gradually emerged from its self-absorbed attentiveness to the moral shortcomings of its own members. While successive committees continued to exhort erring brothers to abandon the sale of "ardent spirits"—a labor always pursued in vain—evidence of greater forbearance of Christian spirit in the church occurs. Most strikingly in contrast to the older Puritan conception of misfortune's being a warranted visitation of God's displeasure was the decision to give material help to the destitute in the Society. The vote of 1839 to supply from church funds the wants of afflicted or impoverished families marks clearly a break with the thinking of the past when every man, prospering or suffering by God's will, could expect no charity from his neighbors.

Moreover, about this time, though affected by accident of geography, the Congregational and the Episcopal churches in Salem were brought closer together. In 1831 the Congregationalists, finding the location on the east side of the river inconvenient, decided to move the meeting house west of the river to a site presented by Daniel Beecher as a town green. Almost simultaneously the Episcopalians chose to abandon the Gunntown church location and build a new edifice on the green in Naugatuck center. The meeting house and the new St. Michael's now rose one on the right, the other on the left of the green, and for the first time church members of a Sunday morning could greet each other as they entered one church or the other. Probably this new opportunity for neighborliness henceforward brought the two congregations spiritually nearer, and from the middle thirties onward the cleavage between the two shrank steadily. St. Michael's installed a resident minister in 1833 and in the years immediately following saw the number of its communicants increase notably.

Perhaps the growing strength of the Episcopal church eased the way for the first Roman Catholics in Salem. In 1842 a first Roman Catholic family settled in town. The Mahers of

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necessity went to mass in Waterbury, but the mere presence of a family devoutly dedicated to a form of religion so remote from the Puritan concept was electrifying.

The social life in the village to people today would seem barren in the extreme—no newspapers, no moving pictures, no professional entertainers, rarely even the most innocuous sort of parties. The country store was the center of casual neighborly sociability. His purchases made, the farmer might settle down on an upturned box or barrel by the stove to pass the time of day with his friends, to ruminate about the weather, pontificate about the political state of the nation, or spar good-naturedly over some piece of local gossip. The many-partied telephone lines of a later generation failed to spread news as fast as it radiated from the general store. Here were cooked up the practical jokes on Josiah or Jed, and local wits outdid themselves to enliven every stray listener with the reports of horseplay they had engineered. The peddler returning from a several weeks' trip off into the hills had stories to contribute, while the oldtimers, who, as soldiers in the Revolution or War of 1812, had seen the world, might spin their yarns, with familiar anecdotes varied from time to time to prevent staleness. It was simple, homely stuff but to people of the countryside, removed from the main stream of life on the seaboard, it was satisfying. Occasionally young people and old joined in husking bees, quilting bees, or spelling bees at one house or another, and about 1820 singing societies began to meet. The Congregationalists' disapproval of "dancing assemblies" put a damper on any nascent enthusiasm for balls, but even that pastime obviously came into vogue after the hotel ballroom was built. As early as 1797 Harmony Lodge of the Masonic order was launched, with Pastor Fowler himself preaching the inaugurating sermon from the text: "And the Lord stood upon the wall made by a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand."

In the face of the frowns of the church deacons, here and



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there considerable tippling went on, although hard cider or the old New England standby, rum, were the only "ardent spirits" to be had. Furthermore, dark rumor hinted of "gaming" in some places, and in Straitsville at the bustling Collins hotel after its completion in 1811 worldly travelers must have introduced pastimes new to Salem. Here a bowling alley flourished after 1825 where local men as well as stagecoach travelers played. Boys of Salem Bridge every year found time to hunt partridge and pheasant, drop lines in the pools of the brooks for trout, in winter to skate and do "benders" on the wavering thin spots of ice on the mill ponds, and in summer to swim in the swimming holes. Little girls could pick berries or go on picnics. But leisure was rare for boys and girls and adults alike, and the business of living consumed all the hours of most days of the year.

As farming gave way to running the shops for the principal means of livelihood of Salem, communication with a larger world brought about some changes. Sons of makers of Yankee notions going out from the Naugatuck valley for several months of every year brought back new ideas; these peddlers served as liaison with the world beyond New England. Moreover, young men who departed to New Haven for college training for the ministry did not always fall into the pattern expected at home, and their approach to the problems of religious duty and social intercourse made some mark upon the thinking of friends and relatives in Salem. Although not many fathers in these days could afford to train sons for the professions, the community had its share and so was drawn to gradual acceptance of new points of view.

Of the circumstances that hastened this broadening of mental horizons, probably none was of greater importance than the establishment of a post office in Straitsville. The opening of the Straitsville turnpike in 1801, a highway from New Haven to Litchfield maintained at the expense of the turnpike company, immediately brought this section of the Naugatuck valley into regular communication with wealth-

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ier and more sophisticated places. The coach stop in Straitsville made it the logical location for the first federal post office, though later it was moved to the center. Delivery of letters for Salem now need not wait in New Haven for anyone who might be traveling inland, and, though it was still costly to mail letters, confidence that they would reach their destination within days, instead of weeks or months, quickly served to multiply the number dispatched. The closely written sheets that have come down to us may not at first glance suggest any notable change in the outlook of the correspondents. The letters of John Hull, for instance, written over a period of ten years between 1829 and 1839 to his relatives in Salem Bridge, are formal in tone. After elaborate explanations of why he has not written more frequently, his letters contain long analyses of his religious struggles plus exhortation to pray for him and bear with him in his doubts. He was in time ordained as a minister of the Episcopal church. Scrupulously detailed news of friends and relatives is still largely in terms of their spiritual or bodily health, with no allusion usually to their worldly affairs. But the reports cover a wider and wider area as time goes on, so that people at home in Salem hear of friends in Savannah, Georgia, or in Ohio and have brought before them brief vision of life in distant places.

A second influence that affected Salem was the custom, well established by the 1830's, of having an exchange of visits with relatives who had moved elsewhere. There were few families from which some member had not moved to western New York State or beyond. Daughters married men who were beginning their lives in the West, and younger brothers or cousins made occasional visits to these somewhat distant homes and in return expected long visits in Salem. Aunt Sally or Cousin Reuben jolted in by wagon over the turnpike or came by stagecoach to stay for a week or a month and then, upon returning home, often carried off one of the younger children of the Salem family to spend some time in



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new surroundings beyond the mountains. Probably most children in Salem Bridge had opportunity at one time or another to sample life elsewhere. Today when communication is infinitely faster and it takes little effort to keep in touch with distant relatives, few Americans know much of what happens to their cousins; human interest and emotion subside when there ceases to be any challenging difficulty to overcome. But a hundred years ago everyone knew the general circumstances of his second cousins or third, no matter how widely the family might be scattered; and in a pleasant sociable way a kind of patriarchal regime lived on into midcentury.

Indications of the closer contacts with the outside world may be found not only in the greater diversity of subjects covered by books bought for the Salem Library, but also in the founding of the "Salem Lyceum." Discussion clubs or "Lycea" were soon to be a common-place in New England villages, but Salem's launching its group in 1839 shows that it lagged little behind more sophisticated places. Fifty-four men, young and old, signed the constitution and so pledged themselves to participate in the weekly debates on the question set for the evening. Only the weather was allowed to interfere. Unlike the Library Association or the Masonic Lodge, any person might join by signing the constitution and paying twenty-five cents in dues. "Any Person," however, referred only to males, and ladies, while occasionally invited to submit anonymous compositions to be read, were never invited to attend the meetings. The Lyceum had a vigorous career for some five years, only to disappear from view suddenly in 1844. Later endeavors to revive interest proved futile. Still during its life the Lyceum played its part in directing men's studied attention to political issues and philosophical problems. We may smile at some of the topics discussed: "Is the possession of a bad Wife a greater misfortune than the loss of a good one?" "Is Infidelity more to be deprecated than religious fanaticism?" "Which exerts the great-

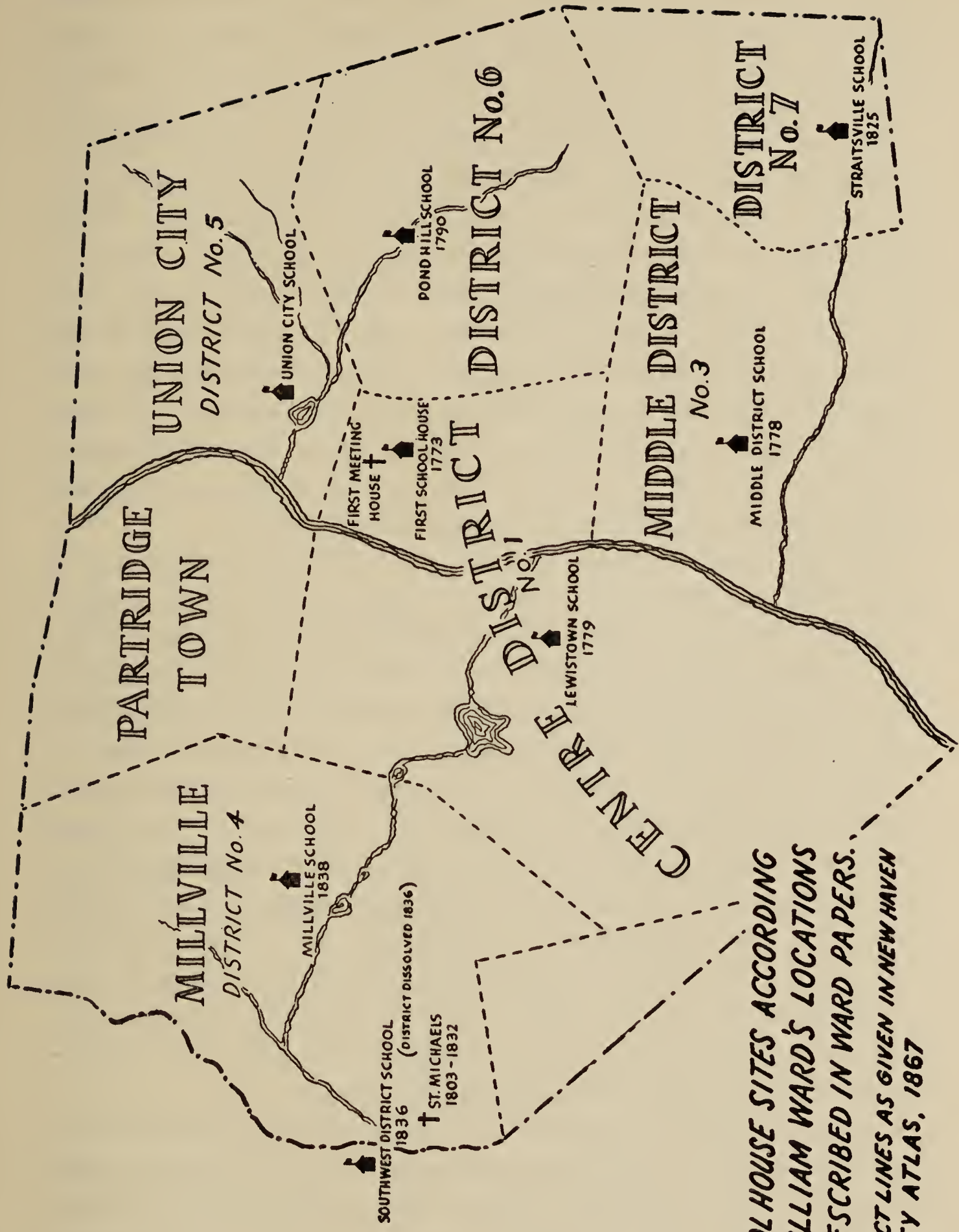
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est influence in the formation of Character—Male or Female?” But the tariff, the proper role of Abolition Societies, the wisdom of banks’ suspending specie payment, capital punishment, and similar themes were also thrashed out, if not settled, and the Lyceum debates gave its members wholesome intellectual exercise.

For all the increase in knowledge and extending of the geographical horizons of the community, from every contemporary source we have brought home to us the precariousness of life and health in those days. The reports in family letters of ill health of various members of the large households are less surprising than the writers’ calm acceptance of its inevitability. Consumption or “debility” was simply the lot of some persons and their deaths were recorded not without grief, but without protest. No widespread epidemic comparable to the “Great Sickness” of 1749 invaded Salem in the early nineteenth century, but rare was the household that did not bury a child or grownup every few years. The list of deaths in the Congregational church records makes sorry reading; for no one today can fail to suspect that many lives could have been preserved by greater knowledge of disease, and the heart is touched by realization of the cost in human suffering of raising a family, when perhaps only five out of eight children could be expected to live to maturity.

In the eight years from 1822 to 1830 Amos Pettingill, the Congregational pastor, entered in the church book not only the fact of each death in the parish but the cause as well. These data reveal a greater exactness in diagnosis than one might expect from country doctors of that time. Medical training was sketchy even in the few “medical schools” then existing in the United States, and licenses to practice medicine were of necessity issued to men with meagre knowledge of physiology or anatomy. While experience and shrewd observation of symptoms might lead a doctor to make correct diagnoses, knowledge was too limited to permit his prescrib-





**SCHOOL HOUSE SITES ACCORDING  
TO WILLIAM WARD'S LOCATIONS  
AS DESCRIBED IN WARD PAPERS.  
DISTRICT LINES AS GIVEN IN NEW HAVEN  
COUNTY ATLAS, 1867**

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ing medicines or treatment to cure many ailments; and surgery before the discovery of anaesthetics had to be confined to amputations. Pettingill's list of fatal diseases included lung fever or consumption, dysentery, diabetes, and many cases of what he labelled tersely "fever," and "Meridan fever." Perhaps "fever" covered the familiar contagious diseases of today, scarlet fever, measles, or diphtheria. With neither state nor town health boards in existence, there was of course no quarantine regulation, and indeed its uses could not have been imagined before Pasteur's discovery of the germ origin of disease. "Meridan fever" was probably some type of undulant fever, a frequent and serious malady when pasteurization of milk was unknown. Only homely remedies applied with common sense by doctor and housewife could have prevented the worst ravages of contagion.

In spite of the high death rate and the emigration of families during these years, the population of Salem grew enough to make more schools imperative. In addition to the six districts created before 1800, two others were set off before 1844, the Straitsville District in 1825 and the City District in 1830. The scheme adopted for a few years at the end of the eighteenth century, of having one tax collection for all the schools in Salem, was short-lived. At least from 1800 onward till 1851 each district was autonomous, appointed its own school committee, tended to the upkeep of its own building, financed its own program, and supervised the teaching of its children. Citizens in every section gave their time freely to serving their districts, and their efforts were far from perfunctory. A sketch map (p. 83) shows the approximate location of the schoolhouses in 1840.

The Straitsville District was cut off from the Middle District when the expanding prosperity of this southeasterly section of the township suggested the likelihood of its becoming permanently Salem's business center. In keeping with the progressiveness of its manufacturing and trading interests, Straitsville inaugurated the first graded school in



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Salem. A two-story schoolhouse accommodated scholars who came from some distance to take advantage of the excellent teaching. The grading was not exacting by modern standards, but the teachers maintained clear distinction between the "higher department" and the lower. Stiles Peck, a whip manufacturer of Bethany, taught here every winter for many terms and rumor reported that the perfect discipline of his classes was related to the ready supply of his factory products. The City District, like Straitsville, the result of a growing community, was sliced off from the Center and Pond Hill Districts to serve the children of the families about the lower reaches of Fulling Mill brook. The name Union City for this region of shops and mills came into general use about this time.

In the nearly half century between 1800 and the granting of full independence to the town of Naugatuck a number of changes took place in the other school districts also. The Gunntown or South West District was dissolved in 1836 and the Millville District school was built a year or two later somewhat nearer the center. In nearly every district larger schoolhouses were put up, each still built with only one room, but with box or pot-bellied iron stoves now replacing the open fireplaces. The old houses were sold to the highest bidder for use as shop, shed, or barn, and the sight of the building being dragged off on wooden rollers by teams of oxen must have given hilarious satisfaction to the boys and girls who had but lately spent weary hours within its walls.

As the nineteenth century wore on schoolmasters became fewer and schoolmistresses more numerous, just as was true in all New England. That gifted and conscientious teachers were willing year after year to struggle with the often ungrateful task of instilling knowledge into the heads of their pupils for the sums of ten dollars a month, or even less, testifies both to the teachers' devotion to their calling and to the standard of living common in the simple, hard-working community of those days. Probably also the meagre

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salaries explain the disappearance of the schoolmaster. For men were needed for many jobs; women for few outside their homes. The pay was, to be sure, often higher for the winter term than for the summer, and board for schoolmaster or schoolma'am was provided by one family or another at a figure set by the school committee, \$1.50 a week at most for a man, \$1.25 a week for a woman. Yet as time went on the district school committees were unable to hire teachers properly qualified to instruct the increasing number of schoolchildren, particularly those requiring something beyond the most elementary education.

The field of instruction, however, did become steadily broader. Geography—formerly omitted as a distraction from the more essential study of arithmetic—English grammar, and finally history were added to the three R's and spelling. While the old geography books with their astounding statements might be a source of joy today to the better-informed twentieth-century child, the scholars of one hundred and forty years ago found this study dull. In Nathaniel Dwight's *Geography*, published in Hartford in 1795, and perhaps used in Salem somewhat later, we find:

Q. Give a concise description of the Giages and Annians.

A. The first inhabit a part of the Congo coast; the latter live in the Macaco. They are cannibals. They kill and eat their first born children, and their friends who die are eaten by their relations. In Macaco there is a market in which human flesh is sold, although other meat exists in plenty. They esteem it a luxury, and it is said one hundred fifty prisoners or slaves are daily killed for the kings table.

But even United States geography was full of odd inaccuracies. One book declared:

The Alleghany mountains are in some places immense masses of rock piled one above another till they reach the height of more than 10,000 feet above a level with the ocean.



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Adams' *Geography*, published twelve years after the reports of Lewis and Clark's expedition were available, states:

The White Mountains are the highest, not only in New Hampshire, but in the United States.

Manifestly failure to master geography lessons would not have left the Salem schoolchildren wanting in sound education, though later texts, such as Olney's, were of course more correct.

Olney's *National Preceptor and Easy Reader*, Webster's *Spelling Book*, Roswell Smith's *Arithmetic and Grammar*, were used in some of the district schools. Other districts relied for arithmetic upon Daboll's *Schoolmaster's Assistant*. History was apparently taught from *Advanced Readers* and books such as *The Columbian Reading Book or Historical Preceptor*, *Collection of Authentic Histories*, *Anecdotes*, etc. No two schools in Salem necessarily used the same texts, and the teachers in each district had presumably considerable latitude about what to teach and how.

Discipline, on the other hand, was a universal requirement. There were no whipping posts in the Salem district schools, but ruler, stick, or whip was ready to the teacher's hand, and used when needed. One room could scarcely contain mischievous strapping boys and girls of fourteen or fifteen, together with small children eager to emulate the bigger ones, without occasional explosions. The career of any teacher unable to control the boisterous spirits of his or her charges was short. Yet sometimes a schoolmistress by sheer force of character was able to dispense with corporal punishment. Reminiscences of Miss Tabitha Castle's regime in the Lewistown school of 1804 describe a serene atmosphere where thirty boys, thirteen of them over twelve years of age, and twenty-five girls, all grouped in one room, learned and recited their lessons without altercation.

In the late 1820's a first "select" or private school was

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opened by the Congregational pastor. After his death in 1830 it was carried on by his son and daughter to prepare students for college or special fields of work. During the winter of 1835-36 a Yale graduate taught a "select" school in Daniel Beecher's house, and, succeeding this, several years later another private school ran for a time in the upper part of DeForest & Company's wool finishing shop. About the same time the Naugatuck Female Seminary opened its doors. Its founders came from Troy, New York, where they had attended Emma Willard's famous seminary. Their prospectus offered an elaborate variety of subjects: Ancient and Modern History, Algebra and Euclid's Elements of Geometry, Paley's Moral Philosophy, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Astronomy, and other branches of "higher learning," while for extra fees students might study Music on Piano, French, Latin, Drawing and Painting, and Use of Patterns. But the charges, \$6.00 a quarter for the regular upper schools courses, and \$1.00 to \$8.00 a quarter for every special course, were beyond the purse of most families here. The boarding school made no lasting impression on Salem, and it is unlikely that the "females" who entered learned more than a few lady-like frills.

But need of more advanced schooling than the Salem district schools could offer was beginning to be felt in the community before 1840. A private school conducted in 1842-43 by a graduate of William and Mary College showed the townspeople what inspiration vigorous teaching could supply to older children, and the debating society which flourished that winter derived much of its strength from the boys studying at the select school. Naugatuck as a separate town was to be seven years old before achieving a high school.

By 1844 Salem Bridge, since the opening of the post office in the center in 1834 frequently now called Naugatuck, had grown sturdily. It included within its twenty-eight square miles two churches, eight district schools, two through turnpikes, several general stores, and more than twenty-five shops



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and factories. Its people, about 1,730 in number, were hard-working and God-fearing, simple in their mode of life, neither very wealthy nor oppressed by stark poverty. But with the self-sufficiency of New Englanders they wished the fullest possible independence. The petition to be recognized a separate town was the result.





PART III

*Naugatuck As a Town, 1844-1893*





## CHAPTER VII

### *Public Affairs and Private Life*

ON an afternoon in mid-June 1844 Naugatuck held its first town meeting in the open air on the village green, with opposing political groups assembling on the right or the left of the moderator's stand to cast their votes for the first town officers. No scene probably could depict more clearly the simple workings of the democratic process. Here on the grass plot between the Congregational and Episcopal churches with no fanfare or wrangling, men elected the town selectmen, the clerk and the treasurer, the constables and grand jurors, and the list of lesser officers: tythingmen, surveyors, haywards, fenceviewers, pound-keeper, and the sealer of weights, measures, and augers. The act of the General Court which, in response to a petition of several prominent men of Salem, set off Naugatuck from Waterbury and included a small slice of Oxford and Bethany, gave the new town one representative to the General Court and provided for division of the towns' assets and obligations for support of the poor, maintenance of bridges, and the like. In October Naugatuck elected Assessors and a Board of Relief—to pass upon protests of assessments—and, soon after, an agent and a treasurer to handle the Town Deposit Funds, money allotted for schools by the state from Connecticut's share of funds distributed from the federal surplus in 1837. The three selectmen received \$1.00 a day for compensation when they were engaged on town business, and a tax of six cents on the dollar as entered on the tax list financed town needs for the first years.

For nearly twenty years most town affairs moved along serenely. Realization that the district schools were not meeting the requirements of an enlightened, forward-looking

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community led in 1851 to marked changes which I shall discuss further on, but otherwise, until the Civil War shattered the calm of political life, Naugatuck's town government functioned as smoothly as if the village were an isolated eighteenth century community. Flurries of excitement over national politics, the Mexican War, the compromise of 1850 with the slave states, the tariff, and in 1854 and 1855 the upsurge of the Know-Nothing party with its violent anti-foreign, anti-Catholic principles, all influenced men's thinking without affecting their attitude toward or participation in local government. Rental of first one building and then another served to provide town offices. Davidson and Goodwin's building, leased for \$35 a year, answered for a time, and later space in the Nichols block became the "Town Hall." Here men of various political creeds carried on their duties as town officers without regard to differences of opinion on larger issues.

One of the first urgent matters facing the community was improvement of highways, a concern of greater importance in the 1840's and 1850's than we nowadays can readily comprehend. For, in spite of a growing concentration of business in the center and in Union City, farms and shops were scattered over the twenty-eight square miles of the town, and the coming of the railroad in 1849 emphasized the desirability of communication with line and depot in the center. Fulling Mill brook was still lined with more factories than any other section of the town and finished products, raw materials, and sometimes coal had to be teamed to and from the railroad. Where in 1850 the flat between Hop brook and the Naugatuck river had one house and could have been bought, Henry Baldwin later estimated, for about \$500, by 1853 the rail tracks nearby made this land valuable, and its rapid building up necessitated layout into streets and a bridge over to Union City.

As formerly, every townsman was permitted to work out his road tax, ten cents an hour being the allowance for a



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man's labor when he supplied only his own tools, twenty cents an hour when he provided his team as well. After 1857 "sewers" or culverts to carry to the river rainwater and seepage from springs on the hillsides were built from time to time, but a town sewage system had to wait for the twentieth century.

By the time of the Civil War Naugatuck was beginning to have the air of a compact town. Over 400 dwellings housed its 557 families. Church Street was building up southward, and the rubber shops near the old woolen mill and the rubber workers' houses stretching along the road toward Millville had already given Rubber Avenue its name. The green was flanked by a new Congregational church with gleaming white clapboards and graceful spire, completed in 1855, by St. Michael's and an Episcopal rectory, and the Union District schoolhouse. Along Maple Street, leading from the green to the bridge over the river, rose on one side the substantial brick factory of the Phoenix Rubber Company, on the other the rubber glove shops, while on Water Street, between the west bank of the river and the railroad tracks, stood several stores and houses, a small Methodist church, and the simple frame building which served as church for the Roman Catholic mission. On the east bank of the river Main Street from the hotel and the Culver store near the bridge led north to the shops of Fulling Mill brook and the homes of Union City. On the hillside above the highway stretched the Hillside Cemetery, adjacent to the old Pine Hill burying ground of 1709. Old trees surviving the first clearings for houses and fields shaded streets and roads, although along the river itself spring freshets, strong enough to tear away or make unsafe the bridges in some years, stripped the valley bottom of all but a few elms and "button-woods."

Many services which the citizen of the 1940's takes for granted from his local government were not considered a necessary function of a small town before the Civil War.

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Street lights were not to be attempted even at the bridge before 1867, although a gas company, organized in 1862, could have furnished gas illumination. Paved streets and sidewalks did not exist. Fire protection could not be organized until a public water system could provide the water for fire fighting, a lack which cost the town heavily in loss of property before the Naugatuck Water Company was created in 1888. A town sewage system also had to wait for water pipes and mains, and even well-to-do households had cesspools and outhouses. Cisterns and pumps supplied adequate pure drinking water but, except in two or three homes where owners could afford to pipe water from the springs above their houses and install private sewage systems, piped bath-tubs and plumbing were to remain an unknown luxury until the 1890's.

The Civil War struck Naugatuck a sharp blow. The town was not yet so industrialized as to have its business life greatly shaken, but, like other New England communities, Naugatuck felt the shock of war profoundly. Abolitionist sentiment had never run strong here, and most men had clung to the belief that armed conflict with the South, so far from being "irrepressible," could and must be averted. Two hundred and thirty-six men from a town of about 2,400 people marched off from Naugatuck in the course of three and a half years, and many never returned. To the generation that has lived through World War II it may appear to have been cause for gratitude that the "boys in blue" were fighting on American soil and that their families usually could follow fairly closely the battles that Company H of the Connecticut 15th Regiment or other units of local men were engaged in. No careful censorship prevented the families at home from knowing that husbands and sons were lined up at Antietam and Cold Harbor, at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. But the anxiety with which people waited for news of battles and the dreaded casualty lists was deepened by their partial knowledge. Probably never since has a pall of fear and grief



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hung so low over whole communities in the United States as in those bitter years.

But the cost in suffering and emotion was by no means all. To care for the families of men gone off to war was an obligation no one wished to shirk. By 1862 the town had voted to give a \$300 bounty to every man who volunteered for the army and renewals of this award in 1863, increased to \$340 and then to \$500 in 1864, piled up indebtedness. Curiously enough to us today, accustomed to the provisions of the 1940 Selective Service Act, in the Civil War the man who hired a substitute for himself, if he were drafted and unwilling to serve, received the bounty, not his substitute who went off to war. The selectmen had to borrow some \$22,000 to finance these bounties, a considerable burden of debt for a town whose whole cost of government previously had been only a few thousand dollars a year.

Meanwhile, every-day life in the town had to go on. Tax collectors collected taxes, contractors improved roads and maintained bridges, selectmen made decisions, spent money to repair the first "sidewalks"—cinder, or dirt paths, or occasionally tar walks—and supervised all public affairs not specifically assigned to other town officers. The schools carried on. Men planted and harvested their crops or produced in their shops the goods the government or individuals would buy. Church societies met; pastors preached to their congregations; men prayed and hoped for the end of the war.

But true to the pronouncement of Scripture, the town found that its poor it had always with it. Public provision for the helpless poor was dictated not only by considerations of humanity but also by state law, and division of Waterbury's responsibilities with Naugatuck had been carefully mapped out when the General Court incorporated the new town. The stern attitude of the early eighteenth century that forced persons likely to be "town charges" to remove from the neighborhood before they had to be admitted as

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residents had given way gradually in Connecticut before more humane laws regulating settlement of newcomers. But in addition to people long resident in the community who, through misfortune, old age, and illness, could not support themselves, new arrivals from Europe in the 1850's had begun to swell the "pauper" rolls of every manufacturing village.

The greater readiness of towns and cities to undertake the support of their poor was an advance over the Puritan position of a century before, when poverty and misfortune was regarded as a judgment of the Lord with which men need not interfere. Still, the frequent use of the humiliating term *pauper* shows how far the point of view of the mid-nineteenth century is removed from present-day concepts of social responsibility. Skilled artisans from the old world—powerloom operators, Scottish paper makers, Sheffield or Rhenish cutlers, Birmingham iron workers and foundrymen—were welcomed eagerly, even imported by contract into expanding industrial communities. But the unskilled immigrants, who laid the railroads, dug the canals and ditches, and carried on the heavy labor of building cities and mill towns, were another matter; for their poverty was often extreme and, if the father were stricken, a tribe of helpless, small children and an ailing, overworked widow might fall upon the town for support.

Naugatuck, fortunately for itself, before 1860 or indeed before 1870, was not a big enough place or firmly enough established as a manufacturing center to attract more newcomers than it could assimilate. The Irish, the English, and the Germans who came in the first thirty years of the town's life found occupation and quickly became as fully self-supporting as the descendants of the first proprietors. But Naugatuck's town fathers needed to look only a little afield at the influx into New Haven and Bridgeport, Waterbury and Meriden, to realize that the burden of poor relief might increase overwhelmingly as Naugatuck grew and that better



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provision than boarding out the town dependents was wise. Beginning in the late fifties citizens in town meeting debated the question of buying a town farm, only to vote it down whenever the proposal was introduced. Again and again they appointed Committees to report on "some better and more humane way" to provide for the town poor. But before 1881 the end result was always continuation of the original scheme of boarding out the completely helpless and paying grocery and fuel bills for families who could partially maintain themselves.

Yet the matter obviously rested heavy not only upon the community's conscience but also on its purse. "Pauper" costs rose year by year, from the days in 1850, when appropriation of the dog-tax fees plus other paltry sums met the expense, to nearly \$6,000 in 1879. In that year a committee reported that there was reason to believe that pauperism in the town was destined to increase steadily for some years to come and that purchase of a poor farm and work house was an obvious economy. Waterbury had declared her poor farm to have proved the only feasible means of meeting Waterbury's problem and recommended that its neighbor follow that example. And in 1881 Naugatuck took action by purchasing a 110 acre farm in Millville. From that time to this the town farm has been the home of the town poor. The land was fertile enough to enable the inmates to raise foodstuffs that covered about half the costs of running the farm; after repair of the old sawmill on the place, some additional saving to the town resulted from cutting timber on the farm. Financially the poor farm was a sound investment. Able-bodied inmates were put to work on upkeep of roads from time to time and so further reduced the costs of the town for their support. Kindly administrators appeared to have kept their charges reasonably well provided with the physical necessities of life, and as happy in spirit as the old and disappointed and weary can be.

In the eyes of some citizens, immediately connected with

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the growing burden of poor relief was the increase in the liquor traffic. As early as 1845 the Connecticut General Court had instructed towns to appoint agents to regulate and restrict the sale of wines and liquors, and Naugatuck had complied. Since public opinion for generations had frowned upon intemperance, and periodically pressure had been brought by the churches upon tavern-keepers to desist from the sale of "ardent spirits," the liquor problem, as such, had been non-existent in Naugatuck before the middle fifties. Not more than five places in the whole township sold liquor before 1854 when Connecticut adopted the Maine law, and in those five excessive drinking was apparently not common. Yet at some time during the late fifties or the sixties, the saloon, the "curse" of American cities, appeared in Naugatuck.

In 1869 a petition from a group of townspeople suddenly projected the issue at a town meeting. According to the petitioners, the unrestricted and intemperate use of intoxicants had become so prevalent in the town "at all times and under all circumstances" that it was an everyday occurrence to find drunken individuals quarreling and disturbing the peace. The citizens assembled were shocked into creating a committee of ten to carry out the Sunday closing law and to prevent unlicensed sale of liquor. They urged all voters to abet the committee, thereby, as the town records state, "rescuing our fellowmen from drunkards graves." At the same meeting the town decided to build or rent a town lockup and buy five pairs of handcuffs and shackles to be kept when not in use in the Town Clerk's office.

But law enforcement was not to be achieved by town votes and committees, no matter how zealous. The sale of strong drink, both licensed and illicit, continued, and as the seventies passed into the eighties the town's annual vote on licensing showed the drys losing ground steadily. To have expected working people in a manufacturing community like Naugatuck in the late 1880's to accept a pattern of life greatly



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different from that of other manufacturing towns would be unreasonable. The saloon of the 1880's, as of the 1900's, was the working man's club. In the absence of other social center and other forms of amusement, it was logically the focus of sociability for many respectable men, much as the country store had been a generation or more earlier. In spite of the occasional hue and cry of local reformers, headed by a branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, there is no evidence that Naugatuck was notably "wet"; though drinking went on in licensed saloons and elsewhere too, the town could not be labelled grossly intemperate.

Possibly it was the increase in drunkenness in the decade following the Civil War that inspired the town in 1874 to appoint a special constable to police the center. Town constables had been elected yearly from the town's first beginning, but a special police to patrol the streets was a new departure. Yet it is testimony to the orderliness of the community that it existed for twenty years with no "police" and for several more with but one. Installation a few years before this time of street lamps, gas and oil, at the ends of the bridge in the center and at other "suitable points," lamps which were to be lighted every evening "from early candlelight to eleven p.m." except when there was a moon, must have eased the duties of the first patrolman. Construction of the New York and New England railroad into Waterbury brought a good many outsiders into Naugatuck in 1880 and resulted in the addition of a special constable "to preserve the peace." Still Naugatuck through most of its existence as a town managed with a minimum of policing, and a uniformed police force appeared first in 1890.

But Naugatuck was growing, and what sufficed in the fifties, sixties, and seventies could not meet the needs of an expanding community whose manufacturing interests were beginning completely to overshadow all other. Long before townspeople as a whole recognized the changing character of their town, as early as 1867, a few voters presented a

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petition to transform town into borough, but it brought no action for twenty-five years. Yet it was increasingly clear, as the factories grew and working people came pouring in, that Naugatuck was outgrowing a town government geared to a semi-rural mode of life. Among the first signs of realization of this fact was the decision to build a Town Hall. Four and a half years from the day in 1878 when the citizens in town meeting voted to erect and furnish such a building, the Town Hall, located opposite the green across from the Congregational church, was ready for use, equipped with its own water supply, sewage system, and gas lighting, offering a hall in its upper story capable of seating some 850 people, and laid out on its first floor with offices. Naugatuck, filled with civic pride, could now see itself in the role of a developing mill town.

During the decade of the eighties other changes marked a new awareness that the home of the rubber shoe and rubber glove and clothing industry of the United States could not indefinitely continue to make shift with country town services. Fire hazards, looked upon as unavoidable in midcentury, loomed larger and larger as investment in expensive mill buildings and machinery went on. A "bucket brigade," formed of men who, on the sound of the church or factory bell, hurried to the scene, was rarely able to save a building or salvage more than odds and ends of furnishings. In 1883 The Goodyear's India Rubber Glove Manufacturing Company took matters into its own hands and purchased some fire fighting equipment, to the use of which individual subscribers were also entitled. The town dedicated \$100 a year to this fund in order to have available that much protection to the new Town Hall and the center bridge.

But five years later it was obvious that such an arrangement was inadequate, and, when the Naugatuck Water Company was formed, a town fire department was also established. With the purchase of a fire engine and hosing and erection of a Fire House Naugatuck could hope to promise



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property holders some degree of safety. It was high time. Loss of mill buildings had occurred at such frequent intervals in the earlier years that shopowners had been obliged to accept the hazard as an unavoidable danger, inherent in the risks of manufacturing in Naugatuck. But as other towns and cities developed relatively efficient fire departments, the disadvantages of carrying on business in a locality that could offer none became apparent.

Naugatuck's specific aspirations to being a manufacturing town were plainly proclaimed in 1884 when the voters in town meeting set up a committee to invite manufacturing establishments to settle in Naugatuck. The necessity of having definite inducements to offer, beyond beautiful scenery and reasonably good rail connections with New York and other markets, was brought home two years later when townspeople learned that other towns were bidding for The Good-year's Metallic Rubber Shoe Company. That company's purchase of the Tuttle Manufacturing Company property, with evident intent to expand its plant by building new units there, promised enlargement of Naugatuck's place in New England industrial life. If the company moved or even built a separate plant elsewhere, Naugatuck would lose potential development by that much. Might such loss both discourage new manufacturing ventures from coming and induce other established concerns to move?

The answer, the town felt, lay in lowering taxes. The tax rate was not high, usually fifteen mills on the dollar, quite as low as in most places. But to persuade the Rubber Shoe Company to undertake its expansion in Naugatuck, the town voted to abate the taxes on the projected new plant by evaluating the property at a nominal sum. Citizens put themselves on record as wanting all manufacturers to stay in the town and to enlarge their businesses here when possible.

This definite commitment of the town to a program of industrialization had several consequences, some probably of more permanent importance than anyone in 1886 could

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have guessed. For the moment it spelled a series of public undertakings to give Naugatuck and her industries all the advantages that other places could provide—a fire department, a police department, street-lighting on a comprehensive scale, health supervision, a good water supply, telephone lines, fine schools, and low tax rates. Some of these services depended upon organization of private enterprises. The first telephone lines were laid in 1879 under the auspices of the Naugatuck Telephone Company; the Naugatuck Water Company was a privately owned concern which built its reservoir in 1888 in Straitsville and piped water to mills, houses, and hydrants as fast as mains could be laid; the Naugatuck Electric Lighting Company, launched in 1887, enabled the town to install arc lights on the main streets.

Supervision of public health, on the other hand, had to rest with the town, and unpleasant were the conditions the first committee reported in 1889. A Board of Health had been appointed seven years before, but its activities were nominal until outbreaks of typhoid, scarlet fever, measles, and whooping cough called attention to the lack of sanitation in the growing town. Rules establishing quarantines of contagious disease, ordering periodic disinfecting of all out-houses and privies, and forbidding dumping of offal and garbage on brook and river banks or vacant lots were only partially effectual; appointment of a salaried health officer in 1892 marked the true beginning of a public health program. So the town debt mounted, but Naugatuck was putting itself into the category of progressive manufacturing communities.

The school system was a special problem, and in one form or another was to remain so for a hundred years. The district system, set up in Salem with the forming of the ecclesiastical society, carried on over through the 1840's without challenge. While many people sensed the inadequacy of the ungraded district schools, particularly for pupils seeking advanced work, no one launched a campaign to alter the



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scheme until 1850. Then the whirlwind struck. A young lawyer, S. W. Kellogg, recently come to Naugatuck, found himself upon the Board of School Visitors. Having a sketchy legal practice and great interest in the public schools, Kellogg took his duties seriously. The conditions he discovered in the eight district schools of the town were appalling. No district had money enough to build a decent schoolhouse. Some schoolhouses, Kellogg asserted, were not fit for stables. Children were crowded into rooms originally designed for half the number of pupils they had to accommodate by 1850, and, save in the Straitsville school in a district of shrinking population, grading did not exist. Boys and girls from four to twenty years of age were herded together to recite and study all in one room. Scandalized at this state of affairs, Kellogg consulted with leading men in the town and then enlisted the help of Connecticut's first State Superintendent of Schools, Henry Barnard. Barnard, a man of great distinction and wide experience, arranged to come to Naugatuck to look over the situation at first hand, and promptly declared that the only remedy was to consolidate several of the school districts and make one good graded school.

But opposition to the proposal was bitter. Whether residents in each district believed that they would be losing precious privileges of autonomy, whether they feared higher school taxes, or whether they merely fought change from a system that had served in Connecticut for two hundred years, today we cannot tell. Kellogg and a few warm supporters of the innovation at length carried the day and five districts, the Center, Lewistown, Partridgetown, Union City, and Pond Hill, were combined into the Union Center School District, leaving only the three outlying districts, Millville, Middle, and Straitsville, independent. The Union Center District now had money enough to establish a high school and to erect a new building for a graded school.

The new schoolhouse, built at the far end of the village green between the two churches and facing Church Street

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and the river beyond, opened its doors in the fall of 1852. The high school occupied the upper story, the secondary and primary departments the lower. The high school especially was an immediate success. It met a keenly felt want of ambitious boys and girls who formerly had to choose between a private school and the difficulties of study amid the confusion of an ungraded district schoolroom. A competent principal, assisted by a teacher who gave full time to the high school courses, awakened latent intellectual interests in the students, some of which found expression outside the classroom. Two rival debating or literary societies sprang up, girls as well as boys participating, and Friday afternoons children of the lower grades, as a great privilege, were allowed to listen to the oratorical contests. In 1855 high school students published a literary sheet, *The Stray Leaf*, not extraordinary for its literary quality, yet indicative of unusual enterprise. The town itself was to have no newspaper for another twenty-two years. And a school library, enlarged year after year, was a great asset. The quality of the teaching together with the fine esprit de corps that developed in the high school soon made it known in the vicinity as a school of distinction. Of the 106 pupils enrolled during the first year, eighteen came from neighboring towns.

Unhappily, for reasons now obscure, the union of all but the remote districts did not survive the 1850's. Its chief proponent, S. W. Kellogg, had left Naugatuck and no one else arose to stem the tide of reaction. About 1856 Union City withdrew, though the withdrawal was not formalized until 1867. In that year Pond Hill followed suit. Thus the town was plunged back into a regime of independencies from which neither town nor borough was able to extract itself for nearly seventy years. The Center school was left stronger than it had been before 1851, but the lack of centralized planning, the loss of centralized financial control, and the general dispersal of effort that followed had adverse effect upon all the schools. The urgency of the pleas, renewed at



intervals by the Board of School Visitors, to abolish the district system altogether shows that the men most familiar with the Naugatuck schools considered the reversal of policy of consolidation unfortunate.

Union City proceeded to establish a graded school of two "departments," in 1873 extended to three, later to four, the fourth by a confusion of terms locally labelled a high school. Otherwise only the Center had graded schools. So the opportunity for all Naugatuck schoolchildren to benefit by a uniform system was lost until 1922. Still the Center, by far the largest and most thickly settled district, succeeded in maintaining a fair standard. The first flush of enthusiasm over the Center high school subsided after Union City withdrew in the late fifties, and the Civil War also cast its shadow upon the school. Boys who had formerly prepared there for college were drawn into the Army, and in the winter of 1861-62 only ten boys were enrolled in the classes in mathematics and mechanics, formerly popular courses. For some months in 1863 the high school was closed altogether. But in the face of all difficulties, serious effort to keep a high level of education in the schools during the grim, distracting years of the war succeeded better than the teachers dared hope.

The chief problem Naugatuck encountered in every district before 1890 was getting children to attend school. Statistical records antedating 1857 are few, but from that year onward the sorry fact emerges that school attendance was meagre, on an average only about two thirds of the children entered in some terms, at times scarcely half. When enumeration of all children between the ages of four and sixteen began to be entered carefully, in order to benefit by the state funds distributed to towns in proportion to the number of schoolchildren in each community, the difference between the numbers enumerated and average attendance became still more shocking. Parents might reasonably wait till a child was five or six years old before sending him to school, or, if they were impoverished, might need to put

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him to work when he was fourteen. But this obviously did not account wholly for the differences between enumerations and registrations or average numbers attending.

A campaign of parental education to stress the need of parents' enrolling their children and then seeing that they attended regularly was started in 1860 by the town's instructing the selectmen to seek out and admonish families who were remiss. But it was an uphill fight. In 1863 out of 582 children in the town, 335 were entered in the schools, and average attendance stood at 287, 48 per cent of the number who might be receiving schooling; the next year the percentage dropped to 40, a decline attributed to the increased activity in Naugatuck's factories where children went to work in defiance of the state law requiring at least three months of schooling in every year for all children under fifteen years of age. Four years later still the report came that a large proportion of the children of school age in the town were employed in factories and not attending school even for three months. When the Board of School Visitors undertook to visit every manufacturing establishment to investigate, they declared all factory owners cooperating with the schools; the fault lay with the parents. Yet when the country-wide depression of 1873 reduced factory employment, there was no improvement in school attendance. By 1873 Naugatuck stood 131st among towns of Connecticut in this respect; attendance in the Center averaged less than half the registrations, in Union City only one third! Bands of boys roamed the streets, ridiculing attempts to force them into schoolrooms, destroying property and—a specially serious charge—disturbing the horses standing in the horse sheds!

Appointment of a town patrolman helped to lessen truancy and threat to send habitual truants to the State Reform School may also have been effective. Foreign parents, at first resentful of interference with their right to do as they would with their own, in time realized the importance of complying



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with the school laws, and gradually the situation improved. But it remained a thorn in the flesh of school authorities even after two truant officers, appointed in 1886, began to pursue their duties vigorously.

Undoubtedly school attendance improved also as a result of making schoolrooms more habitable and work more interesting. New schoolhouses, one in 1872 in Union City with another west of the river in 1876, and three additional ones in the Center, the first built in 1873, the Rubber Avenue school in 1888, and the Oak Street school east of the river in 1890, together with rental of space in Academy Hall for another primary room, eliminated the worst of the overcrowding and enabled teachers to make the schoolrooms physically more attractive. Desks and seats in place of the benches of earlier years provided pupils with greater comfort, while in newer buildings furnaces instead of wood stoves promised warmth in the far corners of every room. Even more attention was given to widening the fields of study and enlivening the teaching. The Board of School Visitors, soon to be dignified with the title Board of Education, in 1874 mapped out the work each department or grade should cover in a school year, beginning in the primary classes with reading and writing, and advancing through the grammar grades to geography, "primary grammar" and "intellectual arithmetic." Early in the eighties the town voted to introduce drawing and music, as well as hygiene courses to expose the perils of intoxicants, and in 1889 in the senior grammar grades classes in government and botany were added. Every schoolchild in Naugatuck now had some varied intellectual fare.

After the passage of the state law in 1886 requiring towns to supply free text books, it became easier for the Board of Education to supervise the work completed in every school. Geographies, spelling books, dictionaries, improved graded readers, music readers, Eggleston's *History of the United States*, later supplanted by Fiske's, algebra and geometry

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texts, and science books were all listed and orders for approved texts placed with local stationers. About this time the head of the schools in the Center proposed four courses of study for the senior grammar grades, and his plan soon went into effect in most essentials. The high school courses, always fairly flexible in scope, were extended even more generously than those in the lower grades, including after 1889 classes in English literature and astronomy, in addition to what had been offered for twenty years, namely, Latin, algebra and geometry, chemistry, and natural philosophy. In the next year new "philosophical apparatus" was acquired. Though the high school curriculum was not laid out to meet college requirements until 1896, successive principals for forty years before then aimed at offering as comprehensive a field of study as town finances and a limited teaching staff could contrive.

Physical education before the nineties received scant attention. Almost apologetically the Board of Education in 1882 alluded to a department in one school's having experimented with calisthenics, which "consuming but little time," appeared to invigorate the whole class. Physical culture first netted a place in 1891 when the town voted \$50 to cover expenses of such work in all the schools. Divided among six districts and some twelve schools this sum can scarcely have permitted purchase of elaborate gymnastic equipment, but at least here was a beginning.

Neither well-ventilated, pleasant schoolrooms, nor interesting text books, nor intelligently planned courses of study, however, could make school work absorbing without good teachers. The innate gifts of Naugatuck school teachers were probably quite as great as those in neighboring communities during much of the town's early life, but as time wore on the salary scale remained so low as to make one doubt the possibility of maintaining a highly competent staff. Teachers' compensation as found early in the century, \$30 for a term of ten or twelve weeks, had inevitably been doubled and



tripled as the cost of living rose, though as late as 1858 one district paid its teacher only \$80, plus board, for a whole year. While the enormously greater purchasing power of money in the nineteenth century redeems the salary figures from the realm of stark penury, the School Visitors themselves labelled salaries in the 1860's inadequate. By 1876 women received \$9 a week, one male teacher \$15 a week, and the principal of the high school \$1,200 a year; by 1889 the rates for female teachers had been set at \$8 a week minimum and \$15 maximum.

Regardless of salary rates, the Board of Education hoped to improve the caliber of Naugatuck's teachers by making more rigorous its examinations preliminary to certifying them. Substitution of written examinations for oral, followed a few years later by re-examination of all teachers in the school system, may have had the desired effect of pushing elderly, unenterprising schoolma'ams on to greater exertions to keep abreast of their profession. But it seems more probable that a surer road to good teaching lay in relieving the overburdened by reducing the number of children any one teacher must handle. Where one primary grade teacher had 107 pupils assigned her, the task was patently beyond the powers of any individual to cope with satisfactorily. Fifteen teachers for over 800 children enrolled might not seem painfully few, until we remember that the four outlying district schools had relatively small numbers registered, so that the burden in the Center and in Union City came closer to being seventy pupils per teacher than fifty. This situation, true in 1881 and 1882 when Naugatuck was growing rapidly, obviously could not be allowed to endure, and more teachers were hired as additional schoolrooms were built. Yet even in 1891 primary grade teachers had classes so big that it was virtually impossible to give each child the individual attention it needed. The miracle is that school work was even fair.

The cost of running the schools was a constant factor in

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determining what the town was willing to undertake. As was true in every manufacturing town, the growth in school population tended to outstrip the financial resources. Most of the increase in population was among the working classes, not the well-to-do, so that the weight of taxation, if it kept pace with the increase in numbers, must rest heavily upon the wealthier people. Complaints about the expensiveness of the school system, therefore, were as frequent as objections to its shortcomings in program.

Costs did not rise steadily, as some years expenditures for schoolhouses and equipment were much higher than in other years. But the trend was upward, from \$2,281 in 1857 to \$7,153 twenty years later, not counting in 1877 about \$2,300 received from the state. In 1885 the town spent \$9,080 on its schools but ran into a snag with the Center District committee who at first refused to allot funds for an additional primary grade room, dubbed as unnecessary extravagance. By 1890 town school charges mounted to \$12,630 and by 1892-93 were set at over \$17,000. The Board of Education endeavored to prove that costs of schooling per child were not rising unduly, in 1880-81 \$8.17 per child enumerated as compared to \$7.52 the following year, and \$16.46 in terms of average attendance compared to \$15.07 for 1881-82, and \$14.14 in 1882-83. Figures of big cities for 1881-82 showed Naugatuck's expenses were moderate, for while New York City gave \$10.35 per child and Philadelphia \$12.90, Chicago's costs ran to \$18.57 and Cincinnati's to \$23.91. Comparative analyses of the quality of education offered was of course not made. In 1891 Naugatuck's cost per child enumerated stood at \$10.55. It became a matter of convincing town voters of the 1880's and 90's that money spent on schools was a wise investment, no matter what the bills for any one year might be.

Just as attitudes about civic affairs gradually altered, so the simple social life of the country town in the course of these fifty years gave way little by little to a more sophisti-



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cated pattern. The changes were naturally slow to evolve, and Naugatuck in 1875 in many respects would have appeared little different from Naugatuck in 1844. New houses and additional factories and stores made the center and Union City slightly more urban, while better roads and more horse-drawn buggies eased communication within the township, and the railroad line along the river bank brought Waterbury and Seymour and the Sound into relatively close reach. Yet Naugatuck till nearly the end of the nineteenth century remained in its points of view a self-sufficient, independent New England town. The church continued to be the directing force and though a man might err from Christian duty during the week, might enter the local saloons, or drive a hard bargain in his business dealings in fashion to make us today question the depth of his brotherly love for his fellows, when the Sabbath came, everyone, man, woman, and child, as a matter of course set off to meeting, to Episcopal or Methodist service, or to Roman Catholic Mass. For many years after midcentury townspeople knew they could set their watches by the moment on a Sunday morning when Deacon Samuel Hopkins drove by to meeting.

The Congregational church, between 1845 and 1849 shrunk to the thirty-three members, took a new lease on life with the coming of the Reverend Charles Sherman as pastor, and by 1876 numbered 216. A few revisions of the Confession of Faith, the Covenant, and the "Rules," published in 1851, adapted the basic principles of faith and church governance more closely to views now acceptable to its older members and to newcomers, and the building of a new church edifice in 1855 bound the members together by new financial responsibilities. Subscriptions for the costly new building were generous: \$50 to \$500 a year for five years, in days when \$800 was considered a good salary. The minister's salary, to be sure, before 1870 was supplemented by a "donation." The two-day festival of the donation of fire wood, potatoes and other vegetables, hams, spare ribs, butter,

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cheese, eggs, preserves, and pies was the great social occasion of the year. Older people gathered at the parsonage for the afternoon and supper, the young folks arriving in the evening for refreshments of doughnuts and cakes and for games of Authors or Blind Man's Buff. The next day was the children's turn. Charles S. Sherman, described by Eliza Ward, one of his small parishioners, as having the awesome mien of an Old Testament prophet, inspired in his congregation a loyalty and devotion that enabled him in the twenty years of his pastorate greatly to strengthen the church. Early in the fifties the church adopted "the systematic benevolent contribution plan" for gifts to foreign and home missions, ministers' aid, college and education societies, and similar funds, while maintaining contributions for relieving the needy in Naugatuck itself. Here is clear evidence of the wider vision the Congregational church was achieving.

Mr. Sherman's successors of the next twenty-five years had firm support in the Society and so could broaden the scope of church activities to meet the more varied demands of a growing, diversifying community. Social gatherings directed by the Young People's Society and the Ladies' Aid increased in frequency, while the Sunday School picnic came to be the Red Letter Day of all the children of the parish. Many people living today remember with nostalgia the trips by train down to High Rock for boating and roller skating or other outdoor amusements. In 1886 a new pastor, the Reverend W. B. Blackman, started a monthly parish paper, *The Parish Bulletin*, which, by carrying news both of the Naugatuck church projects and of what was going on in other places, welded the congregation into still greater unity. Two years later a Parish House, built facing the green, provided a social center for young and old, with the express intent of having it serve all the community, of whatever religious denomination. The "gentlemen's parlor" and the reading room housing the parish library and the new Howard Whittemore Memorial Library were open every evening for



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use of anyone in the town. In the well-equipped building the Parish House Association maintained lecture and concert courses every winter and developed an extensive educational program. Thus in the nineties church sociables and church worship were still the very core of social as well as spiritual life.

Similarly St. Michael's grew in strength. Communicants increased until toward the end of the century they outnumbered the Congregationalists. A rectory built in 1860 adjacent to the church added comfort to the life of the rector and dignity to the appearance of the village. Since by 1875 a larger church was manifestly needed, a new, modernized Gothic, stone-trimmed brick church went up on the old site, and the first building was sold to the School Board and moved back of the green for a schoolhouse. Under the guidance of a succession of genial rectors parish activities flourished: a Young People's Society was launched, a church school opened, and women's societies, like the Guild and the Church Helpers, took charge of social events and good works. On Christmas, Easter, and Whitsun, the great church holidays, St. Michael's celebrated with festivities that once upon a time would have outraged the Connecticut Puritan.

Meanwhile Methodism also expanded in Naugatuck. Early in the 1840's the Methodist Episcopal Conference had recognized the "class" in the village as big enough to warrant its inclusion in an itinerary of a circuit rider, but no settled pastor came until 1849. Two years later the Reverend W. H. Bangs supervised the erection of a small frame church on Water Street, where the congregation met for the next seventeen years. In 1868 the building was moved to the southeast corner of Maple and Church Streets and served till the expanding congregation outgrew it and erected a larger church in a quieter part of town. In both churches a space to the left of the pulpit was reserved for the church elders, from which, the "Amen Corner," every Sunday the elders loudly cried out to punctuate the sermons with energetic "Amens,"

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“Glory hallelujahs” and “Praise the Lord.” Perhaps more vigorously intent than any other one church group in Naugatuck of these years upon direction of the social life of their flock, the Methodists included in their newest church space not only for a “Lecture Room” but for a diningroom and kitchen too. Church suppers and meetings could now be held immediately under the eyes of the watchful elders.

A Union Chapel in Straitsville in midcentury, in the 1870's a mission in Union City, used mainly for a Sunday School but also available for preaching services of various denominations, and in 1890 a Swedish Lutheran chapel supplemented the three larger Protestant churches. Baptists and others strongly attached to their own special form of worship leased one chapel or the other.

But the most notable change in Naugatuck's church life came with the growth of its Roman Catholic population. As Irish Catholics settled in the town, the wish to have a mission here took shape. Masses, said first in the house of Patrick Conran about 1850, were attended by more and more families until it was possible to build a small mission church on Water Street where priests of neighboring parishes regularly celebrated the Mass. Year by year the mission grew and in 1866 the Bishop of Connecticut created St. Francis parish here. While the physical property of St. Francis was steadily enlarged, first by purchase of a rectory and site for a church, and then in 1890 by the completion of an imposing Gothic church, still more remarkable was the development of the parish in other respects. Some 160 families in 1876 were increased to 500 by 1890. Devout Catholic families gave not only liberal financial support, but by their behavior built up the good name of Roman Catholicism in this erstwhile Puritan community to a point where Protestants also were moved to contribute to the building fund. At the laying of the cornerstone of the new church in 1882 the largest crowd of people ever seen in Naugatuck gathered to witness the ceremonies. It took eight years to finance and finish the build-



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ing and the great bell tower, modelled upon St. Gertrude's in Louvain, Belgium, but, when completed, church and lofty tower dominating North Church Street gave visual evidence to the whole countryside of the strength of St. Francis parish.

To a degree perhaps unique in New England towns, relations between Yankee or foreign-born Protestants and Catholics in Naugatuck were from the outset harmonious. A brief period in 1854 saw the Know-Nothings in evidence, but apparently the adherents of the party were swayed by political, not religious convictions. Some of the old families of the town, it is true, tended to look down their noses at foreigners, but this attitude of superiority to all newcomers was mostly confined to householders who had little contact with the manufacturing interests. Hostility to Catholicism which cropped up in many mill towns of New England never took root here. Such was the rapport between people of the two faiths that the town voted to fence the Catholic cemetery just as it did the town burial grounds, a generosity unheard of in other places.

Possibly the sterling qualities of the Catholic people themselves was responsible for this unusual tolerance. Beyond doubt the grace and tact of the priests assigned to the parish was contributory. They considered themselves members of the community as well as Catholic priests, and gave thought and energy to promoting many useful civic enterprises. Father Brady, Father O'Gorman, and Father Fagan, one after the other, served upon the Board of School Visitors, each in turn giving wise counsel and much attention. Timely comments from Father Fagan, when he acted as Secretary of the Board, stressed the wisdom of offering the best possible schooling to all children, irrespective of nationality or religious faith, a policy which other members of the Board supported warmly. An illustration of the skill and common sense with which Naugatuck's priests handled potential controversies was the settling of an issue in 1877 occasioned by the

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protest of Catholic parents in Union City at having their children expected to join in the short religious service with which school sessions were then daily opened. Father Fagan discussed the matter in friendly spirit with the other members of the School Board, consulted with the State Secretary of Education, and then arranged to have the obligatory service dropped. No one was offended, and Father Fagan became an increasingly influential person in Naugatuck. Catholic priests and Protestant pastors maintained always a mutually co-operative attitude, as admirable as it was rare. Where such an atmosphere existed neither outright bigotry nor petty fault-finding could grow.

The Catholic church, like every well-defined group in Naugatuck, soon began to organize some forms of secular social life. The Young Men's Catholic Institute, started in 1871, attempted to put at the disposal of young men of that faith means of wholesome diversion and self-improvement. A library in the Nichols Block supplied books, and here members gathered once a week for some years. Two distinct Masonic lodges, a branch of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, a lodge of the Ancient Order of Foresters, and one of the Knights of Pythias also found place. A chapter of the International Order of Odd Fellows and a branch of the Eastern Star add to the evidence that Naugatuck by the 1880's was conforming to the general American scheme of organization of social intercourse. Yet it is probable that this fostering of societies was due less to acceptance of a formula than to tacit recognition of the fact that through these groups newcomers without established ties in a growing community could most readily make a place for themselves. Joining a fraternal order as well as a church was a means of making friends and forming enduring connections. Though a town grown from 2,800 in 1870 to 6,200 in 1890 was still small enough to make neighborliness a matter of course, the aids given by organized societies were rightly made the most of.

Occupying a somewhat special place was the Isbell post of



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the Grand Army of the Republic. Formed in 1874, and named in memory of Lt. John D. Isbell, a gay-spirited, much-loved young volunteer who died at Harrison's Landing in the summer of 1862, the Isbell post claimed at one time seventy-five members. The veterans were a close-knit group with no political axes to grind, but anxious to have a memorial to their comrades who had died in the service. The Soldier's Monument on the green was the outcome. Through private subscription and town funds money was raised, and in a moving ceremony on Decoration Day, 1885, the monument was unveiled. Not untypical of Civil War monuments all through New England, Naugatuck's granite soldier, standing at ease on his column, represented the grief and the gratitude of the whole town. Familiar as we are today with photographs from the jungles of the Pacific of soldiers and sailors of World War II, to us the beard and mustache of the Civil War boy no longer seem strange; the touching youthfulness and profound seriousness of the staid figure emerge from the stone. The parade and the dedicatory services marked a great day in Naugatuck. Several thousand visitors attended the exercises and were fed afterward by a committee of townspeople in a large tent put up in the field beside the school green. But the significance of the occasion lay in its being a community-wide affair in preparation for which everyone could share by gift of money or service. It was the first time that the whole town undertook an enterprise financed and carried out not by a few, but by all.

In spite of the increasing number of festivities arranged by the churches or fraternal societies, family life and family parties all through these years were only less important than early in the century. But more leisure brought about many changes. The hours spent in filling woodboxes, dipping candles or cleaning oil lamps, pumping water, making soap, and turning out by hand most articles of clothing for the family were freed for other work or for play, as coal for fuel, gas or electric lights, water piped into the houses, store soap,

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and some ready-made clothing became commonplaces. In the early nineties by no means every family could afford the luxury of all these labor-saving devices, but there were few households, if any, that did not benefit by some. The dress-maker went the rounds spring and fall to make children's and women's clothes for the year, but men's clothes were readily bought from Naugatuck merchants. Grocery stores and meat markets or local meat and fish peddlers simplified feeding the family, and gradually the households where the farm supplemented the income from shop and factory became the exception rather than the rule. This releasing of time from the sheer mechanics of living meant opportunity for reading the books accumulating in the libraries and evenings of leisure for meetings and parties, while the railroad brought within reach the pleasures of a day at the seashore or the excitement of attending a performance of Edwin Booth or Joseph Jefferson at the theatre in Waterbury.

Children's amusements differed less from those of earlier years than did their elders'. The enchantment of hillside, river, and mountain brook remained even after new factories in both Waterbury and Naugatuck with their industrial refuse and sewage began to transform the "raging Naugatuck" into a mill river and destroy favorite haunts of boys and girls. Older boys played ball by the school on the village green with a rubber ball, such as perhaps only the "Rubber Town" could have supplied, while small boys, perched as "Jack on the Fence" to chase balls into the Episcopal church yard or across Church Street, watched admiringly, with the promise of a turn at bat as reward for acting as retrievers. On rainy days schoolchildren in the center gathered at recess in the Congregational church horsesheds, a fascinating rendezvous, and every day lined up at the old well for a drink out of the iron cup chained to its side. Apart from the lessening of drudgery at home, for children Naugatuck in 1892 was little different from Naugatuck in 1844.

Yet the span of years from 1844 to 1893 includes a period



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in which much of America was shifting from a rural to an urban point of view, and even a small New England town could not escape the effects. From the day in 1852 when the town voted to permit no circuses or entertainers to come to Naugatuck to the time in 1887 when voters established a set fee to be charged outside theatrical companies for the use of the "Gem Opera House"—which was actually the large room with its stage in the Town Hall—townspeople had come close to a revolution in their ideas of what was permissible in a Christian community. Dancing, once suspect, by the seventies was perfectly respectable, and occasionally hostesses sent out formal printed invitations to dances. In fact, even in the late fifties the local toy and candy shop proprietor, a negro named Noble Weston, began to be called upon to play his guitar and sing at parties! More often, game parties for young people and afternoon tea parties for their mothers supplanted the quilting and husking bees of an earlier generation.

The publication of a newspaper in town probably marks as sharply as any other one development the changes occurring in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The *Enterprise*, a weekly published from 1877 on by a well-informed, though somewhat eccentric citizen, lasted for over thirty-five years; but other papers started not long after had brief careers. Of these short-lived sheets most interesting is the *Agitator*. It was a workingman's paper published on a co-operative plan by the Knights of Labor. That a town of less than 6,000 people should see the rise of a labor paper is proof both of the enthusiasm the Knights of Labor were able to command in their heyday in 1886 and of the belief that Naugatuck was destined shortly to expand enormously as a manufacturing town. But the *Agitator* was unable to survive any length of time even after it merged with the *Review* and, under new management, as the *Citizen* endeavored still to offer Naugatuck an honest, radical newspaper. Only the *Advocate* fared better, perhaps because it was a daily. It

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was printed by Naugatuck's new job printer, F. K. Perry. In 1894 it sold out as a going enterprise to the *Daily News* corporation. Naugatuck citizens for years had had New Haven and Waterbury newspapers to read, so that a locally published paper was not essential for keeping people informed of the world at large. But a local sheet was a boon to local merchants, called attention to local civic issues, and was a source of pleasure to its readers. The every-day life of the town, faithfully reflected in news items and advertising, was changing in character, and the newspapers at once hastened the process and registered the change.

To Naugatuck's population, before 1844 virtually exclusively Yankee, expanding industries had added a great many Irish, some British, Germans, Swedes, and a few Poles, altogether over half of the 6,200 inhabitants of 1893. The lecture courses and concerts of the 1880's and early nineties had given the town a surprisingly wide cultural background, while Naugatuck's particular industrial connections had created a kind of cosmopolitanism as unusual as it was stimulating. The quiet village had become a vigorous small city.



## CHAPTER VIII

### *From Shop to Factory*

**F**ROM 1844 to 1893 America saw more dramatic changes than in any other one half-century of its history. While Naugatuck's economic development in these years illustrates the most essential changes all America was experiencing, the smallness of the town and some peculiarities of its manufacturing program saved it from suffering the worst consequences of the new order. Its industries expanded with relatively healthy growth, without the sudden mushrooming that brought to many small towns thousands of polyglot peoples to crowd into tenements designed for a handful. Yet Naugatuck too was marked by the inroads of industrialization. The village of about 300 families in 1844, virtually all Yankee, all Protestant, almost all in reasonably comfortable circumstances, with a common, simple standard of living, had become by 1893 a town of about 1,100 families, nearly half of them foreign-born and Roman Catholic in religion. Most striking difference of all was the disparity in wealth.

Though before midcentury some men were distinctly better off than their neighbors, owned more land and had more various and prosperous manufacturing interests, economic differences were not sharply noticeable. The community was homogeneous. Nearly fifty years later Naugatuck still had no slums like those in many New England cities; the most sordid forms of poverty had not invaded the town. But factory owner and shop hand were no longer social equals. A few men had amassed fortunes; others were barely able to feed their families from day to day. A proletariat in the strict sense found no place in this small manufacturing city, but the man earning \$1.25 a day could not now provide a

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family with more than the barest necessities of life, while his employers lived in elegance, unostentatious but patent. That the disparities between rich and poor were not more obvious is probably due to the fact that the successful manufacturers of Naugatuck lived in Naugatuck, saw with their own eyes the conditions of their employees, and, despite their acceptance of the new industrial pattern of America, still could not reject completely responsibility for the community of which they were a part.

The emergence of the Lewis family as an economic power serves as a good example of the changes in Naugatuck in these years. The first Lewis, to be sure, had laid the foundation of the family fortune in the eighteenth century by acquiring wide acres of land and developing a flourishing export trade; but not until his great grandson, Milo, started his cotton mill did the Lewis family begin on its long successful career in industry which set its members apart as industrial leaders and men of wealth. To the money Milo made in his warp mill before Salem became Naugatuck, he and his sons added in the 1840's profits from the rubber shoe shop as well as from the farm. When William DeForest had to assign his property in the woolen mill, Thomas Lewis took charge and from that source also made money. Stock in the Tuttle Manufacturing Company, makers of farm implements, paid dividends. Investment in a second rubber company may have been less profitable, but by Milo's death the Lewises controlled or had large interests in four of the six most important industrial enterprises in Naugatuck.

A curious document, found in the archives of the United States Rubber Company, shows how closely the family bound together its interests. In about 1845 Milo, and his sons, William, Samuel, and Thomas, entered into "Articles of Agreement" among themselves, pooling their resources and responsibilities into a literally closed family "corporation." Milo and William were to be in charge of "the farming business of such concern," Thomas of the cotton mill,



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and Samuel of the India Rubber Shoe business. "In prosecuting all the varieties of business in which the above named parties may be engaged, there shall be no separate or private interest whatever except the clothing for each one's self and family." And before undertaking any new transaction aside from his regular business each member of the "Company" must submit his proposal and have it approved by a majority of the Company. How large a part this family compact played in solidifying the family position in Naugatuck we can only guess. When the buildings of the shoe shop, of the Union Rubber Company on Maple Street, and of the satinet mill burned in the fifties, these Lewis enterprises were obviously not crippled by the disasters. The plants were rebuilt and, while a new company took over the Union rubber shop, the satinet factory still under Lewis ownership ran for another twenty years. The cotton warp mill also burned after the Civil War, only to be rebuilt and to resume operations, presumably on a profitable basis until 1872. And always there was The Goodyear's Metallic Rubber Shoe Company, as the original Samuel J. Lewis Company was called after 1845. Heavy stockholders in this booming pioneer concern, the Lewises, father, sons, and grandsons, could scarcely fail to be securely entrenched in the New England industrial world. Members of the well-to-do farming family of the early nineteenth century had become business magnates.

While success like the Lewises was the exception, it was not unique, for the opportunities of building up great industries were created by the peculiar conditions of that era of the nineteenth century. Chance entered in occasionally, but imagination, judgment, courage, and singleness of purpose were greater factors in making the careers of Naugatuck's industrial leaders. Irrespective of the individuals involved in the town's manufacturing developments, Naugatuck must have changed as the years went on. What might have happened had a few men of the town made different decisions from what they did? Had the Lewises and DeForest

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not risked supporting Goodyear's vulcanized rubber project, Naugatuck might never have become the first rubber town of America. Had Bronson Tuttle not had the vision to push malleable iron manufacture when his father's hoe shop burned, Naugatuck might not have developed its great foundries. But while the men who directed Naugatuck's economic life might have altered the course of events in particulars, it is inconceivable that they could have affected for long the general trend. For Naugatuck, by its setting and the inheritance of its people, was bound to be caught up in the tide of American industrialism.

The first step in this process of converting the rural village into a modern manufacturing community was the introduction of rubber manufacture. The first shop, the Samuel J. Lewis Company, began operations in the fall of 1843, the moment Milo Lewis, his son Samuel, and Milo's brother-in-law, William DeForest, had been convinced of the importance of Goodyear's invention. In 1845 the company was reincorporated as The Goodyear's Metallic Rubber Shoe Company. Meanwhile these same men, supported financially by a few others, formed a second company, the Naugatuck India Rubber Company, later called the Union Rubber Company, which for some years made rubber clothing and later merged with the footwear company. The original capitalization of these two companies was unusually high, \$30,000 for the footwear unit, \$40,000 for the other. Yet after only a few months of operation, in 1845, the value of their manufactures was set at \$120,000 a year. The woolen mill and the cotton warp mill at that time valued their annual production at \$110,000 and \$23,500 respectively, and these were well-established concerns. By 1850 the two rubber companies together had run the volume of business up to nearly a quarter of a million dollars a year and employed about 130 people, over three times the number of hands in any other one shop. So from the very beginning the rubber shops assumed a significant role in the town's industrial life.



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For a decade or more the inventor, Charles Goodyear, as technical advisor kept in close touch with the Naugatuck factories; but apart from his experimentation on further improvements of "metallized gum elastic" he was not active in the companies' affairs. Still Goodyear was very useful to the new enterprises. Almost fanatically sure of the revolutionizing importance of the material vulcanizing now put at the disposal of manufacturers and consumers, he vigorously publicized the various uses of rubber. In a pamphlet published in October of 1844, he named over fifty types of articles in which "metallic gum elastic" would be superior to any other material—leather, silk, cotton, wool, or wood—and he undertook to demonstrate "by ocular and irresistible evidence" the extraordinary, valuable qualities of the new composition. His imagination, in fact, encompassed practically all the uses to which later generations were to put rubber, with the sole exception of the pneumatic tire. Once manufacture had begun and the American public could put vulcanized rubber products to the test of use, Goodyear's enthusiasm proved contagious. A market for Naugatuck's rubber goods was therefore never wanting.

But threat to Naugatuck's infant industry sprang up almost at once in the form of patent infringement, when Horace H. Day of New Jersey, after manufacturing for several years without license, attempted to have Goodyear's patent declared invalid. This challenge gave birth to one of the first trade associations in America. The Goodyear Shoe Association, composed of the five principal companies licensed by Goodyear to use his patent, undertook to defend his title. Having induced the inventor to accept a reduction of royalty from three cents to one-half cent per pair of rubber shoes manufactured, the Association raised a fund, employed Daniel Webster as counsel for the then enormous fee of \$15,000, and plunged into legal battle. It was a famous case, both because of the basic issue and because of the reputations of the opposing lawyers, Rufus Choate, at one time Webster's

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distinguished successor as Senator from Massachusetts, retained by Day, and the broken but still eloquent Webster representing Goodyear's interests. The \$15,000 legal fee paid out by the Shoe Associates, a sum large enough to have financed at least half a dozen manufacturing shops in Naugatuck at that time, may be an index of how far-reaching the influence of the rubber companies was in transforming the Yankee village into an industrial town where "big" business held sway. In 1852 the Court decided in Goodyear's favor and the Naugatuck enterprises were free to carry on without further fear of pirate competition. Thus the worst danger was passed. In spite of the obvious benefits of collaboration between the competing members of the Shoe Association, the merger proposed in 1853 and at intervals thereafter did not materialize for nearly another forty years. In the interim the Association functioned as a group only to standardize styles and regulate prices.

The men who launched rubber manufacture in Naugatuck combined various qualities in their characters. In addition to the ambitious, shrewd Lewises there were William DeForest and Goodyear himself. Emmet A. Saunders who grew up in Naugatuck and became in time superintendent of the footwear plant described these two:

Here was DeForest, a man of immense energy, fine bodily presence, not much education, but with a tremendous faculty for trading and swapping. He was my "beau ideal" of a "fine old gentlemen." Large frame, fairly pleasant face (red, red, very red) buff waistcoat, tail coat and brass buttons and tall hat, usually brown with long furry glistening nap, very shiny. He always spoke of Goodyear with a wholly loving, but half contemptuous accent, as if he were a dearly beloved "enfant terrible" that should not be held responsible for anything except to be his own blessed self.

And there was Goodyear, a dreamer, reaching for the moon, careless about such small and entirely material things as food, shelter and clothing for himself and family. He would be dependent for these upon any friend. He would give any one anything



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he had if they wanted it more than he did just then, and he would take from any one, borrow from any one, not because he was a mendicant or "dead beat" but because these things were of little importance and sometime "when his ship came in" he would fix it all, immaterial and temporary. DeForest fed and housed him and his family when they had no other refuge. He was not the man to keep account and store up items—but when Goodyear had anything that could be sold or traded because of DeForest's competence and Goodyear's incompetence, DeForest would take hold and help.

In 1858 Samuel J. Lewis, first head of The Goodyear's Metallic Rubber Shoe Company, died, and two years later Charles Goodyear. No one could of course fill Goodyear's place, but Lewis was succeeded by James E. English as president of the shoe company. English, already a man of wealth and political fame in Connecticut, three times state Governor and later Representative and Senator, never came to Naugatuck to live. But the other officers of the company continued to make Naugatuck their home. Samuel Lewis' son George became secretary of the company in 1864 and twenty-six years later president. George A. Lewis, though a hard-headed Yankee like his forebears, had a perception of his responsibility for the welfare of company employees that tempered his business attitudes with kindness. Even after the United States Rubber Company was formed local men remained in control of the footwear plant, and Naugatuck was spared the consequences of absenteeism in her largest industry.

Meanwhile from the mid-forties onward all kinds of rubber manufacture in Naugatuck thrived. To the first two companies a third was added in 1847 when The Goodyear's India Rubber Glove Manufacturing Company moved from Litchfield to Naugatuck and set up in a building across the street from the footwear company. Though always a smaller concern than the shoe company, the glove enterprise grew quickly. With the outbreak of the Civil War the manufac-

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ture of ponchos, blankets, and rubber clothing began in addition to the original mainstay, gloves and mittens. One contemporary recalled seeing coats on hangers "marching like a platoon of soldiers into the vulcanizer." In the 1860's dress shields were another important item of manufacture. By 1870 with some \$200,000 invested, and an annual payroll of about \$40,000, the company was doing a \$200,000 a year business, increased ten years later to over \$670,000 a year. In 1876 the company began to make footwear also, and in 1894 entered the merger of the United States Rubber Company.

For forty years the market for rubber shoes and boots continued to expand. Introduction in 1856 of the cloth-top arctic, an invention of Thomas Wales, one of the shoe company directors, entrenched the product of the local shoe shop firmly in public favor, and in the seventies the use of gay red and blue woolen fabrics for arctic linings had wide popular appeal, foreshadowing the style consciousness of the boot-makers of the twentieth century. By 1880 the company had a business of about \$975,000 a year. A large new plant, built near the river at the southern end of the village in 1886 after the town had abated the company's taxes, increased the shop capacity to 25,000 pairs of boots and shoes a day and made Naugatuck more than ever the "first rubber town in America."

The quality of rubber goods made in Naugatuck gave their makers a deservedly high reputation and encouraged other manufacturers to start up here. The possibility of finding an experienced labor supply in a community familiar with vulcanizing rubber probably explained the coming of new enterprises. So six new rubber companies began operations in Naugatuck in the course of thirty years. Three, the most famous of which became the successful Seamless Rubber Company of New Haven, moved to other places, one company was forced out of business, and the others were absorbed by the powerful original Goodyear companies. In 1892, when the shoe company's capital had mounted to



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\$1,000,000 and its payroll to nearly a thousand people, it chose to merge its interests with other members of the Rubber Shoe Association formed in the fifties, and the United States Rubber Company came into being. Two years later the glove company also entered the combine. But local autonomy was not greatly affected, and local plant officials, unfettered by corporation policies, still dealt direct with their own employees.

For the working people of Naugatuck the rubber shops spelled a good many advantages. In the first place, wages were always higher than in most plants in the vicinity: a foreman in the early fifties earned as much as "eight shillings per day, New England currency," or about \$2.00. In 1880 unskilled labor averaged \$1.50 a day in the rubber plants, whereas \$1.00 or \$1.25 a day was customary in most other factories. Hours were long, eleven hours a day six days a week till near the end of the century, but such a schedule was universal. Working conditions were no more disagreeable than in any other factory, and photographs taken in the shops from Civil War days onward show groups of employees looking well cared for and not unpleased with life.

At the glove shop the rules were as follows:

1. All employed in this factory to remain one year—or forfeit the amount hereinafter specified, and to make such kinds of work as the market demands.
2. Each one is to allow eight cents on each day's wages to be kept back till the end of the year when the full amount will be paid.
3. If anyone leaves before the end of the year for any other reason than sickness to work anywhere, or marriage, the eight cents per day reserved is to be forfeited and the balance of payment to be at the piece work price from the beginning.
4. All to do a day's work anyway, and if work is needed very much to do all they can, and defer leaving for business, recreation, or visiting if possible till we get through the hurry.

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5. Damaged or bad work to be charged to the one making it, after or on the day's work.

6. In work hours all to attend strictly to their work and give a good example of correct deportment to others, and where necessary to leave the factory for a longer time than 15 minutes, permission must be obtained from the Foreman, and always permission must be obtained for absence of half a day or more. All to be in their places when the bell stops ringing.

7. We wish and expect all to attend some place of Public Worship on the Sabbath.

Monthly wage payments were customary in all factories, and the daily deduction of eight cents, designed to keep the labor force stable, was apparently no affliction. Moreover, rule four clearly hints at a casualness about attendance quite foreign to the age of the time clock. Scarcely a word of any discontents among rubber workers of the early decades has come down to us. Today a faint memory runs of a lock-out in one shop in the middle eighties which ended when the company announced that thenceforward only women would be employed on that particular work and any man wishing his old job back should go home and put on petticoats. So the affair was turned into a joke and was soon lost sight of entirely. Men and women employed in Naugatuck's rubber shops evidently considered themselves well off; many stayed on for twenty and thirty years of service, and some families today have been employed for four generations. Certainly compared to the employees in New England textile and paper mills or bootshops, they were indeed well off.

There was one major drawback to employment in the rubber shops, however, a factor that was to make increasing difficulties for the community after farming and the operation of many small manufacturing establishments ceased to offer alternate occupations to Naugatuck's working people. For the rubber companies found their products seasonal, and in consequence closed down their shops for six, eight, or even ten weeks every year. The public would not buy rubbers or



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arctics in the summer months, tennis shoes and other rubber-soled footwear were still unknown, and no other articles, hot-water bottles, surgeon's gloves, ponchos, or items for industrial use, were in great enough demand to warrant year-round production. So employees of the shoe and glove plants every year had weeks of unemployment to face, a situation that the high wages of the remaining months of the year could not wholly mitigate. Before the end of the nineteenth century the burden of the layoffs was less heavy than it became later. Farmers needed help in haying, the foundry usually was ready to hire rubber workers temporarily, and the builders, whose busy season was in the summer months, could use additional hands. The women employed in the rubber industry might tide over the slack periods by some kind of domestic service. The problem for Naugatuck created by this seasonal employment detracted greatly from the advantages of being the "first rubber town" of America, but no one knew how to remedy the situation. It was accepted as unavoidable. And in spite of this, more than any other one industry rubber manufacture gave Naugatuck her livelihood.

Fortunately Naugatuck was at no period a one industry town. In the decade before the Civil War Harry and David Stevens built up a \$200,000 a year business in making carriages which kept some 140 people busy producing nearly 200 fine buggies a month. Their customers were largely in the southern states where Connecticut products had achieved a wide reputation, perhaps the result of incidental advertising disseminated by two generations of Yankee peddlers. But because of this localized market, the war brought the enterprise to an abrupt close, when bills due from southern planters could not be collected. Wheel-makers, however, carried on in Naugatuck. The Naugatuck Wheel Company in Millville operated successfully until fire destroyed the works in 1867, and Hart Hubbell on Long Meadow brook ran his shop till the end of the century. Yet even in the 1880's when

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economic forces in American life were pushing toward the eradication of small manufacturing businesses Naugatuck clung with persistence to some diversification. For example, James O. May, a local druggist, succeeded in establishing in Union City a bottling business for ginger ale made by carbonating local spring water. In 1888 the company was converted into the Diamond Laboratory Company for manufacture of patent medicines, primarily Diamond Marshmallow Cream, an emulsion reportedly helpful in curing throat and lung diseases. The Laboratory Company maintained its prestige and operated profitably down into the twentieth century.

But the manufacture of the small wares for which Salem had been known faded out gradually. Before midcentury the pre-eminence of Yankee notions had been coming to an end, although fabrication of buttons and similar light articles continued to be important for some years. In fact the fifties marked the peak of activity on Fulling Mill brook. Four button shops on the brook in 1850, producing annually about \$100,000 worth of brass, tin, bone, and cloth-covered buttons, had shrunk by 1860 to three shops with less than a sixth of the earlier volume; twenty years later only one button-maker survived, though some buttons were made "up the brook" until after 1900. Change in fashion, which eliminated decorative buttons from men's coats and waistcoats and reduced their use on women's clothes, explains the decline in demand, while the cost of small scale manufacture depending on water power doubtless accounts for the inability of Naugatuck button shops to compete in the narrowed market. Button-making by the 1870's had ceased to be an art and a craft and had become a mechanized industry. In the face of this situation the local button-makers converted to other lines or went out of business. Their abilities created for them opportunities of employment in the expanding rubber shops or the iron foundry, both industries with certain futures.

The other small wares produced in the shops along the



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brook before 1880 were varied in type—shoulder epaulets for Union soldiers during the Civil War, webbing for suspenders, hairpins, molasses gates, hose connections and faucets, harness rings, buckles, thimbles. The men who manufactured these articles were mostly direct descendants of the makers of Yankee notions, men whose inborn hankering for tinkering enabled them to adapt their gifts at least temporarily to meeting the wants of a new generation. In 1872 Homer Twitchell bought of Monroe Terrell the button factory built at the mouth of Fulling Mill brook and there began making umbrella fittings and safety pins. Rights to the Lindsay patent made Twitchell for many years the only safety pin manufacturer in the United States and for this line he used special machines. For finishing the umbrella “fixings,” on the other hand, he adhered to the old system of letting out the work to women in the neighborhood who worked at home. Thus he combined new methods with old. Today this factory, now owned by the Naugatuck Manufacturing Company, alone of all the mills on Fulling Mill brook is still operating. Even the successful Warner & Isbell foundry and machine shop, which had equipped many of the local mills with shafting, gearing, and various kinds of machinery, was not rebuilt after fire destroyed the works in 1883. Though a new plant was put up on the site in 1886 by a pump company, it ran for only a year and was then abandoned.

Before 1880 also on the other streams tributary to the Naugatuck there was a number of diverse small enterprises. In a shop on Beacon Hill brook in the forties sulphur match-making originated; in another across the road from the Straitsville foundry Edwin Benham made stove- and shoe-blackening; and rumor reports that nearby at some period counterfeiters made paper money. About 1866 the Renz family converted the old Collins grist mill into a factory for shear manufacture; downstream two lumber and shingle mills turned out builder's supplies; and near the mouth of the brook in Cotton Hollow the Lewis cotton mill down into

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the seventies produced warps and coarse cotton yarns. On Long Meadow brook the carriage-wheel factories flourished and on Hop brook stood Nichols' slaughter house, a cider mill, a spool mill, and a sawmill, and for a time a pocket knife factory. The Ward brothers, however, tapped the Naugatuck river itself for power. In their little shop on the Ward farm after the collapse of their clock business they made first brass pins and later curtain rings and fixtures.

Meanwhile a new industry assumed a large place in Naugatuck: for a generation cutlery came to be the principal item of manufacture of the smaller shops. About 1848 Smith and Hopkins, then well-established button manufacturers, ventured into cutlery making and by 1850 were producing some \$15,000 worth annually. This set an example to other small shopowners. The next year the Union Knife Company, sponsored by Enos Hopkins, opened a well-equipped factory on Fulling Mill brook where for nearly thirty years pocket knives were made in volume. But the insufficiency of the water power of the brook, which evidently dwindled as years went on, put the shop at a disadvantage, and when the factory burned in 1885 its owners abandoned the enterprise. Not long afterward the dam broke, so that today only a tangle of brush and boulders marks the site where seventy-five years ago German and English cutlers had busily turned out Union knives.

Several other cutlery plants, however, had sprung up in Naugatuck after the Civil War. Most important of these was the Connecticut Cutlery Company, organized by George A. Lewis, Bronson Tuttle, John H. Whittemore and other men interested in the iron foundry. While the Connecticut Cutlery Company operated for less than fifteen years, it employed at one time 150 hands and produced annually over \$160,000 worth of pocket knives and tailor's shears, as well as hair-pins, faucets, bill holders, and "elastic tires" for carriages. The company was a large customer for the castings made by the Tuttle and Whittemore foundry, for the shears were



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made by superimposing fine steel upon a malleable iron casting. In fact, there is little doubt that the originators of the company launched the business in order to have an assured local market for part of the output of the foundry. By the time the Tuttle & Whittemore Company had extended its markets to all parts of the country, the shear shop on Fulling Mill brook, no longer essential as a customer, was allowed to die. For a time the Gifford Manufacturing Company took over the plant, but before the middle eighties its business in shears and edge tools had evaporated. The shop stood empty until in 1892 David Pratt set up his thimble factory there.

Of the lesser cutlery concerns, two ran for a very short time. German-born Leo Renz, on the other hand, after 1867 developed on a shoe-string of capital a considerable business in shear-making. Most of his large family worked in the shop on Beacon Hill brook and only the death of the older generation brought the venture to an end there. Somewhat longer-lived was the Naugatuck Cutlery Company, formed in 1872, which, having acquired part of the Lewis cotton mill property in Cotton Hollow, carried on until 1888.

Thus for over twenty years Naugatuck was known as a cutlery center as well as a rubber town. What the factors were that wiped out one industry in the locality while the other grew in strength is difficult to determine. First, doubtless, was the fact that the knife companies never were so well-financed as the rubber shops: the local backers of the bigger cutlery shops had many other manufacturing interests and, when competition from knife-makers elsewhere increased, Naugatuck men withdrew or sold out to these rivals. Greater mechanization made expert craftsmen less essential than formerly, and cutlers could readily find employment in the malleable iron works or the rubber shops. Furthermore, the location of the knife and shear plants on the small streams, where water power had originally given them an advantage, in time came to be a nearly insuperable handicap. Substitution of machine for hand work meant constant increase in

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power consumption, and supplementing water power with steam necessitated carting coal up the hills to the shops on the brooks. Transplanting the factories to sites on the railroad in the valley was too expensive. So by 1885 the Naugatuck knife industry was largely a thing of the past.

The fate of the two textile mills which had initiated Salem into full-fledged factory production methods is easier to understand. Gradually both ceased to play any dominant part in the town's industrial life. A fire in the Cotton Hollow mill in 1869 probably discouraged the Lewises from pushing warp manufacture here, now that other localities in New England, better supplied with power, more accessible to markets, and with great factories equipped with more modern machinery, had relegated the Naugatuck mill to relative insignificance. Moreover, the family was concerned in several more profitable local industries to which in the seventies the brothers and cousins concluded wisely to devote their energies. The woolen mill, run for some thirty years by Thomas Lewis, continued longer as an outstanding enterprise. Unlike the cotton mill which had barely been able to hold its own, between 1850 and 1870 the woolen mill expanded its business from \$70,000 a year to nearly \$200,000. To satinet manufacture Thomas had added the making of cassimeres and other light-weight wool fabrics in the sixties, and, by continuing the company store at which employees were expected to trade and local suppliers frequently had to take payment by barter, the company operated profitably throughout its life. Nevertheless, in 1876 the property was sold to the Dunham Hosiery Company, a Hartford-owned concern, which converted the factory to knit goods—underwear, hosiery, sweaters, and jersey and cotton net for arctic and rubber linings. In this form Naugatuck's first large manufactory survived into the twentieth century. But the absentee-owned hosiery plant, in spite of its employing about 200 people in the nineties, never rivalled in importance the rubber shops or the iron foundry.

For second only to rubber, malleable iron making had



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come by the latter part of the century to be Naugatuck's chief industry. Its roots were here, in fact, before Goodyear displayed his vulcanizing process to DeForest and the Lewises, inasmuch as the foundry in Straitsville had been in operation since 1839. The story of the development of Bronson Tuttle's and John H. Whittemore's malleable iron works is closely related to that of Eben Tuttle's hoe shop. Eben Tuttle, manufacturer of farm implements since 1822, in 1846 moved his shop from Prospect to a site on Fulling Mill brook where in a large new factory with improved power he greatly expanded his operations. About this time he took several men into partnership, and in 1851 the Tuttle Manufacturing Company was incorporated. But before long Tuttle became dissatisfied with this arrangement, not improbably because, having always previously managed his affairs alone, he found collaborating with partners uncomfortable. So about 1851 he bought an old wheel shop located west of the Naugatuck river in "the flats" between the river and Hop brook. Here he set up a new hoe shop, leaving his former associates to run the older establishment "up the brook." The Tuttle Manufacturing Company, in turn, soon moved across the river to a site near the foot of Church Street where the company turned out a fine line of steel hoes and rakes for many years.

Meanwhile, Eben Tuttle, partly to satisfy a wish of his eighteen-year-old son, Bronson, in 1854 added an ell to the shop in the flats and, by agreement with the iron workers in the Straitsville foundry, moved the malleable iron works to the new shop. The American Malleable Iron Company, shown on the town plan of 1856, suggests that the Tuttle foundry for a time adopted that name. In any case, here iron-casting on a small scale proceeded as an incidental adjunct of the hoe shop until in the summer of 1858 the hoe shop burned to the ground. But the ell housing the iron foundry was not destroyed, and young Bronson Tuttle, then twenty-two years of age, persuaded his father to permit him to

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form a new partnership to develop the malleable iron business instead of rebuilding the hoe shop as such.

Bronson Tuttle's partner in this doubtful venture was John H. Whittemore, the twenty-year-old son of a minister in Southbury, Connecticut, a young man who had come to Naugatuck in the spring of 1858 to do some bookkeeping for E. C. Tuttle & Company. Whittemore's father had to sponsor for his son, not yet of age, the loan of \$1,000 from a New Haven bank. He was warned by the bankers of the grave risk of so large a loan to a young man with no experience and little judgment. The rest of young Whittemore's share of capital he borrowed of Bronson Tuttle. But John Howard Whittemore for all his youth was a young man of acumen and determination. To Whittemore's financial perspicacity his partner, Bronson B. Tuttle, added the practical experience in iron-working gained first in his father's hoe shop and later in the association in the foundry with the malleable iron workers from Straitsville. Abetted by the knowledge of iron-founding brought by Stephen Warner, Noyes Wilmot, Patrick Martin, Jacob Keeling, and a few other older men, Tuttle and Whittemore embarked upon the task of building up a great industry.

Refined malleable iron castings in the days before steel was made in this country were needed for a great variety of purposes where strength together with bending properties were necessary. From the very beginning the partners found much of their business in miscellaneous jobs for which their customers supplied the patterns. But they soon developed some specialties, evidently partly determined by local demands. The wheels for the fine Stevens carriages and the wagon wheels made in Naugatuck's wheel shops required malleable iron castings to reinforce the hubs. In this field Tuttle and Whittemore found at once a steady outlet almost at their doorstep. The demand for sturdy hub reinforcements for the heavy caissons and wagons used by the Union armies during the Civil War increased this market, and



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in the firm's early years carriage irons and harness trimmings comprised nearly half the business. Manufacturers of agricultural implements also needed the malleable iron castings, and the Tuttle Manufacturing Company, as well as rake- and scythe-makers elsewhere, became eager customers. Snath-makers, who turned out the wooden handles for scythes and sickles, for many years bought cast malleable rings in volume.

Soon after the conclusion of the Civil War the development of castings for "steel-laid" shears created a line which remained one of the major items for the foundry for nearly fifty years. The launching of the Connecticut Cutlery Company in 1866, financed by the men interested in the iron works, probably marked the beginning of the shear castings business, for both the pocket scissors and the large shears produced in the Fulling Mill brook "Shear Shop" were made by welding sheet steel to malleable castings of the proper size. Other cutlery firms quickly followed as customers, so that the Naugatuck foundry was soon supplying all the chief shear-makers in the country. One entire furnace was dedicated to shear castings until in the twentieth century forgings began to supplant malleable castings for scissors.

During the 1870's when American railroads were spreading new networks of steel over the continent, Tuttle and Whittemore found a profitable article of manufacture in Pratt washers used on the fish plates with the bolts to hold the rails at each end. Assembled with pieces of rubber bought of Naugatuck's rubber shops, Pratt washers, named after their originator, were turned out in enormous quantity here. The railroads used other malleable parts too, but orders for other items never ran so large.

But even with ready markets and skilled foundrymen in charge of production, making malleable castings was a costly enough business to make one today marvel at the courage of the two young partners. The pig iron alone cost them in their second year of operation once and half their total capitalization, and had a melt been spoiled the loss must have

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been a heavy burden. In actuality by 1860 the firm had already an annual production of over \$51,000, and by 1870 was turning out 650 tons of castings a year valued at \$130,000. Profits were ploughed back in, and capitalization was increased from a few thousand dollars to \$30,000, to \$60,000 and then to \$100,000 in less than thirty years. New units were added to the plant—new furnaces, a pattern shop, assembling shops and an office, the latter for some years providing space also for the Union City railroad station. In 1871 Tuttle and Whittemore, having outgrown the partnership, incorporated as the Tuttle and Whittemore Company, eighteen years later reincorporated as the Naugatuck Malleable Iron Company. Their investment by then had been extended to foundries in other cities, Cleveland, Chicago, Indianapolis, and Bridgeport.

As the volume of business expanded, the numbers on the payroll also increased. The forty employees of 1860 grew to ninety in 1870 and in 1883 to 368, not a great number compared to the rubber shops' but over twice the number of people in any other one factory in the town. Yankees, Irishmen, Englishmen, Germans, and after 1880 a few Swedes and a handful of Poles worked side by side in the foundry, in the performance of the heavy day's labor building up among themselves a curious rough camaraderie.

In keeping with the tradition common in many metal working shops of nineteenth-century New England, Tuttle and Whittemore through most of this period manned their plant by the "contracting" system. That is, a master workman—a pattern-maker or a molder or an annealer—contracted with the company to produce a given quantity of work for the year. The company supplied space, heavy equipment, heat and light, the contractor the workmen and small tools if any were needed. So Samuel Hopkins and James Murphy for some years were the contractors for the general foundry work, including molding, core-making, and melting; Oscar L. Warner and Patrick Brennan held the con-



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tract for trimming, annealing, and shipping. The contractors, paid by the company a flat sum or a stipulated amount per ton, were free to engage their help on any basis they could. The scheme had the advantage that every contractor was eager to teach his men the most efficient methods of work, but it created a temptation to pay helpers as little as possible. Whatever did not go out in wages could go direct into the contractor's pocket. While the belief was general in Naugatuck that the ordinary foundryman was not well paid, no one thought of questioning the system; it made bookkeeping simpler for company officials, was usually satisfactory to the contractor, and possibly held out hopes to the common workman that if he worked hard enough he might himself eventually be able to act as a contractor.

In view of the status of working people in Naugatuck in the 1880's, the contracting system in the foundry, the seasonal employment at the rubber shops, and the uncertainty of the future in the cutlery plants and the button shops, it is not surprising that a vigorous lodge of the Knights of Labor appeared when the followers of Terence V. Powderly began to organize. The labor paper this group sponsored furnishes our only clue to the power of the local lodge, for, as was traditional in all functioning of the Knights of Labor, its very existence was veiled in secrecy. The collapse of the national organization ended the career of the Naugatuck lodge before it had made any definite moves to alter local conditions. But the existence of the lodge, however brief, shows an awareness among Naugatuck's laboring classes that the community was no longer a country village but a part of American industrial society.

The fundamental social changes in these fifty years brought about by the town's industrial growth was closely linked with the improvement in transport. The completion of the first rail line from Bridgeport through Naugatuck to Waterbury meant easy movement of freight, raw materials, and finished products, but greatest of all in significance,

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coal. The water power of the Naugatuck river itself was not large enough to supply many factories, and Fulling Mill brook, the chief tributary within the town's limits, never produced more than 240 horsepower. Nearly every successful shop in Naugatuck was supplementing water with steam power by 1880, a situation that would have been impossible without coal, in spite of the quantities of wood available on the hillsides and burned in many plants on the brooks for some years. And as hand fabrication and finishing gave way to mechanization in every factory, power consumption increased. This fact alone explains in large part why the plants located in the center with the railroad tracks running past their doors, expanded, while those lining the brooks to which coal had to be carted uphill shrank and eventually closed down. The importance of the railroad was so obvious that in 1880 and 1881 a branch of the New England Railroad was put through the northwestern section of town.

Yet though after 1849 the steam car supplanted the stage-coach and cart for hauling freight in and out of the valley, the teamsters, the blacksmiths, the feed-dealers, and the livery-stablemen were still vital to the town's economic life. Down into the twentieth century teams of powerful draft-horses carting goods to and from the railroad depot were a familiar sight, a necessity to mill-owners, a means of livelihood and pride to their owners, and a source of pleasure to small boys.

Meanwhile the steady expansion of industry and the attendant increase in population naturally opened up opportunities for building contractors. In some measure the saw-mill operators gave way to suppliers of brick, as fire hazards dictated the substitution of brick for wood in mill construction. But frame dwelling houses continued to be the rule, and the lumber dealer, the carpenter, and the tinsmith made a substantial, even if not a luxurious living.

The opening of a job printing shop in town in 1886 also may have been an indication of the general confidence in



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Naugatuck's future. The appearance of local newspapers coupled with the rising interest in advertising gave F. K. Perry his start. He printed the *Advocate* during its short life, and later, because of the quality of his press work, many other firms gave him orders. A town aspiring to be a manufacturing center could well afford to support a job printer.

The growing factories with big payrolls to handle every month affected another aspect of Naugatuck's business development, for in time local banking facilities were needed. The first institution, however, The Naugatuck Savings Bank and Building Association, had a brief and inglorious career. Launched in 1853 as a co-operative, it aimed at providing financing for new houses, stores, and mills. Henry Baldwin relates that L. S. Spencer, the first depositor, opened his account with \$10 one day and turned around four days later to draw out \$190. Inexperience and over-optimism, tempered doubtless by some stupidity, obliged the directors to close out when the country-wide panic of 1857 put severe pressure upon every banking house in the United States. The state legislature annulled the charter in 1858. Thereafter until 1870 Naugatuck had no bank of any sort. In that year, in spite of the memory of the earlier misadventure, local business men held a mass-meeting to consider means of providing safe investment of the savings of mill hands and other small investors. So the Naugatuck Savings Bank opened, using as headquarters for a number of years the office of whoever happened to be the treasurer. The first deposit was \$5, from a fourteen-year-old colored girl. State laws now guarded the administration of mutual savings banks, and the trustees and officers were meticulously careful. Arthur H. Dayton was made manager in 1885 and remained in charge for more than fifty years. Under his able direction the Savings Bank established a firm reputation for stability.

Still a savings bank could not meet commercial banking needs and before 1883 Naugatuck business men had to rely upon Waterbury and New Haven banks. But the arrange-

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ment had obvious inconveniences: stories tell of sudden discovery at noon of a note due that day at a New Haven bank, so that, to save his credit, the borrower had to drive a horse into a lather to reach the bank before closing hours. In 1883, therefore, a group of leading citizens applied for a charter for the Naugatuck National Bank. Originally capitalized at \$100,000, the bank began business in the Town Hall. Its officers were wary and steered the institution through the successive ups and downs of American business cycles without loss to stockholders or depositors. In 1890 its resources were over half a million dollars. The town by 1893 was thus a well-rounded, largely self-sufficient community.

Only in retailing did Naugatuck fail fully to meet its own requirements. Local merchants could not keep pace with the town's industrial development; Waterbury and New Haven, large cities, were too near. Meat markets, grocery stores, a modest haberdashery, several drygoods and "fancy goods" stores, a stove and hardware shop, a furniture dealer's, as usual combining a house-furnishing with an undertaking business, two drug-stores, and, toward the end of the century, an ice cream parlor existed, but these were small scale "emporia." About 1885 a local ice dealer began to peddle ice. But as the prosperity of Naugatuck's factories grew, well-to-do people tended to purchase all but the daily necessities in the larger stores of the neighboring cities, or even to make shopping expeditions to New York. Though mill hands patronized the local stores only, their incomes limited their purchases to inexpensive items. So mercantile interests, as in other small manufacturing towns, became overshadowed on the one hand by local industry, and on the other by metropolitan competition. The railroad in some ways affected the small town merchant nearly as adversely as it benefited the manufacturer. And Naugatuck in 1893 was irrevocably dedicated to manufacturing.

Thus by the time that town government was changed to borough government, the main lines of Naugatuck's devel-



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opment were laid down. The petty capitalism of the first half of the century, when a few hundred dollars accumulated by farming or perhaps in selling woodland was enough to finance a small shop, had given way before the pressure of industrial capitalism, with the forming of corporations. Now the advent of much larger, wholly impersonal organization was at hand, whereby local enterprise was to be immediately affected both by the interests of unknown stockholders scattered over the United States and more directly by banking interests in Wall Street. Who paid the piper called the tune. The local self-sufficiency alluded to earlier was to become more and more superficial. The small shopowner—the button-maker and producer of other Yankee notions, the cutlery manufacturer, like the clockmaker before him—was pushed out of existence by large-scale enterprise, financed by money brought in from outside the Naugatuck valley, depending upon expensive machinery for economical operation, selling its products in a national market not to be reached by peddlers or New England jobbers. Though Naugatuck employers continued to be influenced by awareness of the direct effects of wagecuts or layoffs upon their employees, their fellow-townspeople, increasingly their ability to diverge from the pattern of industrial management as it took shape elsewhere in America was limited. Units of the United States Rubber Company or the Naugatuck Malleable Iron Company, now closely related to foundries in all parts of the United States, could not decree wage rates or hours of work without consideration of conditions in other sections of the country. Naugatuck, without knowing it, was enmeshed in the new American industrialism.





PART IV

*Naugatuck the Borough, 1893–1944*





## CHAPTER IX

### *Borough Government and the Community*

NAUGATUCK was established as a borough by act of the Connecticut legislature in January 1893. (See Appendix IV.) Unfortunately, the circumstances leading up to this change of status are nowhere recorded. Some twenty-five years earlier a few townspeople had proposed petitioning for a borough charter, but the motion had led to nothing. In 1895 the *Naugatuck Citizen Souvenir* hinted of gross abuses in management of town affairs in the late eighties and alluded to the valiant efforts of the sturdy citizens who defeated the corrupt machine. But we are left to guess that from the defeat of petty local bosses, whose very misdemeanors are not specified in print, arose the movement to have a new form of government.

The concentration of authority in the hands of the Warden and the advisory Board of Burgesses permitted more effective municipal planning than was possible under the system of town selectmen, but otherwise for years the change made little difference. Amendments to the charter in 1895 and 1897 extended the borough limits to include the whole town, added to the former list of officials, created a Borough Court, and laid restrictions upon spending the public money. The freemen in town meeting had to approve the annual budget in detail, and money voted for one purpose could not be spent for another. So control of the purse strings was left with the citizens. Most public officers held the same titles and performed the same duties as under the town; only now some were appointed by the Warden instead of being elected. But as salaries for most borough officials were nominal or nil, the men who accepted office were generally public-spirited citizens more concerned with serving the commu-

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nity than with private advantage. The Warden received \$200 a year. Nevertheless being Warden was an honor sought by men of all types and of many different walks in life.

This machinery of government for a community of less than 15,000 persons usually functioned adequately. Naugatuck's greatest period of growth took place between 1890 and 1900 when population increased from 6,218 to 10,541. By 1915 the population numbered just under 15,000 inhabitants, somewhat more in 1918 and 15,051 in 1920. From 1911 onward some citizens agitated periodically for a city charter, believing that it was costly in delays to have the Warden and Burgesses obliged to pass upon virtually every petty detail of borough administration, and in 1925 a proposal to hire a City Manager was lost by only a few votes. But in spite of some irritating drawbacks to the borough regime, it served reasonably well. A Warden before the 1930's could give satisfactory service to the public without spending more than a few hours a week at the job. Then, when the depression heaped upon him many additional responsibilities, the freemen raised his salary to \$2,000 a year.

The zeal of the Warden or the pitch of public enthusiasm for improvements determined whether the borough administrations slid along in a routine groove or undertook major innovations. Demand for better fire protection in 1895 led to installation of a fire alarm system and more hydrants, need of better street lighting resulted in multiplication of arc lights, and heavier traffic in the streets, particularly after the coming of automobiles, brought sidewalks, curbing, and pavements. Yet when the Warden in 1911 invested some thousands of dollars in brick-paving Maple Street, the main thoroughfare from the west to the east side of the river, the hue and cry against his extravagance prevented his ever being re-elected, though today, thirty-five years later, William Neary's brick pavement is still in good condition. While that first big paving job was in process, laying telephone and electric light wires underground in the center was com-



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pleted also. Little by little successive Wardens undertook paving, widening, and straightening of streets, planting trees to replace those cut down, extending water mains and sewers. Gradually the country town assumed the outer mien of a city.

Today it is hard to envisage clearly the Naugatuck of 1895 or even of 1910. The difference between 1865 and 1895 is shown somewhat by pictures, but no photograph of the borough in the nineties reveals the mud or dust of the roads, the ugliness of protruding telephone poles, and the unsightliness of the rubbish dumps on the river banks. Year by year the rubber shops were spreading out over the southwestern section along the river bank, while to the north in the flats the foundry was covering a wide area with its furnaces. East of the river, however, along the brooks where industrial life had been concentrated in midcentury, abandoned mill sites grew in number until by 1910 both Fulling Mill and Beacon Hill brooks had nearly wholly reverted to blackberry patches and second growth woodland. But before 1910 city planning in the center effected two great changes which made an enormous difference in Naugatuck's appearance.

The first change centered about the green. There two handsome new buildings arose in 1894, the Howard Whittemore Memorial Library on the east, and the Salem School on the west. The former was one story, built of hewn stone on simple classical lines. The school, which replaced the old frame schoolhouse of 1852, was of warm red brick, three stories above ground, but so set against the hillside at its back that it fitted cosily into its surroundings. Still more revolutionizing eight years later was the removal of the beautiful white clapboarded Congregational church from the corner of the green near the Soldiers' Monument. Locating the new church across the road next to the parish house opened up the green into a pleasant, unbroken square of greensward. But the substitution of a somewhat ornate red

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brick church with a massive towering belfry was less happy. The graceful spire and the restrained lines of the old meeting house had proclaimed the New England town in a manner not possible in any new church, no matter how imposing.

The loss of the old meeting house notwithstanding, the center was steadily improved. In 1905 a magnificent new brick and stone high school, like the Library and the Salem School the gift of John Howard Whittemore, was erected along the cliff road above and just north of the Salem School. Stanford White, one of America's most distinguished architects of the period, designed it. Built right into the hillside, one story high at the west but, because of the sharp drop of the terrain, three stories on the east toward the green, the new high school was so much the wonder of its day that in *Believe It or Not*, Ripley drew attention to it. Near its base on the "Horseshoe Green," the donor's son some years later erected a bronze shaft in commemoration of Naugatuck's soldiers of World War I. Diagonally across the green the Neary building went up in 1911. Its substantial three stories looking out over Church Street at once provided Naugatuck with a modern office building and rounded out the town center architecturally.

The second outstanding change in Naugatuck's appearance came from shifting the railroad tracks through the center in order to eliminate dangerous grade crossings. Originally the line had cut from the river near the old Ward shop up between Church and Water Streets into the very heart of the town. To move the tracks and still have factory sidings available necessitated swinging the river bed eastward for a stretch of nearly two miles, so that the tracks might skirt the west bank from Maple Street to the rubber regenerating plant. The task begun in 1906 consumed nearly three years but left the borough both safer and, seen from the west, more attractive. Yet the shift sacrificed a long stretch of the river bank and made the view of southern Naugatuck from the hills to the east irredeemably industrial. And it meant



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that future generations could not fully exploit the scenic possibilities of the stream, though later walling the embankment above the Whittemore bridge and laying out walks along it salvaged part. After the tracks were moved a fine-looking new passenger station was built somewhat north of the old, and a new freight depot half a mile south. Upon the site of the old depot on Maple Street the Fire Department then built its engine house.

Other improvements to the business center followed. In 1910 the death of John H. Whittemore gave impetus for erecting a memorial to the man who had given the town its two finest schools, its handsome library, and various other benefactions. At a great mass meeting citizens decided that a bridge would be a fitting monument; so with funds raised by public subscription a stone bridge at the foot of Maple street was begun. The building of the bridge gave opportunity to all citizens, rich and poor, prominent and obscure, to share in a public service, and when completed in 1914, the John Howard Whittemore Memorial Bridge lent the borough new dignity. Not since the raising of the Civil War Soldiers' Monument had so many citizens shared so wholeheartedly in a community undertaking.

On Church Street in the next twenty years new buildings arose which further added to Naugatuck's appearance. A fine Post Office was erected beyond the Savings Bank building of 1911 and in 1930 a new home for the Naugatuck National Bank, both banks and the Post Office constructed on classical lines in keeping with the Whittemore Library adjacent. The original National Bank building next to the Town Hall was then, by gift of Miss Gertrude Whittemore, converted into a children's library. Across Church Street near St. Francis' church and next to St. Francis' school in 1922 subscribers built a three-storied red brick building for the Y.M.C.A. Further up the street stood St. Francis' rectory, an attractive new building for the telephone company, and a number of spacious residences. Beyond in the flats near the

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foundry, the Hop Brook School, gift of Harris Whittemore, was built in 1916.

Meanwhile houses for Naugatuck's growing population had been multiplying in every section of the township. On the hillside west of the river the well-to-do built roomy, comfortable, frame houses circled by wide verandas that commanded sweeping views out over the valley. Here well-kept lawns and flower beds were universal. In the outlying rural areas old farmhouses were modernized and new houses built. In Union City, south along Main Street, and along the road to Bethany mill hands built less pretentious houses, financed by borrowings from the Savings Bank or the Building & Loan Association. For though Naugatuck's factory workers were not people of means, most of them succeeded in building and owning their own homes. Few were the streets along which one could walk at the end of a summer's day without seeing on the porches of the little clapboarded houses workers and their families rocking away in cane-seated rocking chairs, or perhaps weeding the vegetable and flower gardens in the yards. Two- or three-family tenement houses were the exception, as each new family to come to Naugatuck strove to save and build for itself.

But as this outward urbanization proceeded, the borough encountered some trying problems. Perhaps most urgent was the need of sanitary sewers, made essential by a piped water supply and inside plumbing in homes. Yet year after year the citizens in town meeting postponed shouldering the cost. In consequence, half a dozen private Sewer Associations sprang up, to which residents of different neighborhoods contributed but which before 1921 were not under borough control. Three separate outlets fed sewage into the river from these privately owned sewers. At length in response to the insistence of the borough Engineer the borough began to acquire title and to lay out a unified town system. Had the freeman in 1895 or in 1901 or in 1910 heeded the pleas of the Warden, Naugatuck might have had an efficient layout



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at fractional cost. The piping installed at twenty-eight cents a running foot with labor at \$1.00 an hour could have been laid at eight cents a foot by workmen paid \$1.50 a day. A disposal plant, planned since 1929, has not yet been achieved.

Although one might have anticipated severe epidemics resulting from lack of proper sanitation, the death rate of the borough was surprisingly low. Before sanitary sewers were laid, the annual rate was about seventeen per thousand, and by 1903, when some work on a sewage system had been completed, it had dropped to 13.3. Still the incidence of contagious disease was discouraging. The *Citizen's* boast of 1895 that "the pure fresh air and open surroundings of necessity have an elevating influence on the moral natures and an invigorating effect on the physical beings of both young and old" was not wholly justified. For nearly thirty years the borough suffered occasional inroads of typhoid fever, and in 1912 faced a siege of smallpox, when over three hundred cases were reported within a few months. Scarlet fever, measles, and diphtheria also took annual toll, some years a heavy one. In 1903 scarlet fever was so rampant that the schools had to be closed for five weeks. The public health officer and the medical profession worked diligently to impress upon townspeople the vital necessity of observing basic laws of public hygiene and with the inauguration of daily health inspection of schoolchildren after 1905 succeeded notably in curbing the spread of contagions. This wise policy was carried further in 1920 by the appointment of a public school nurse who maintained contact with parents, followed up care of children needing medical attention, and gradually effected a general understanding of the urgency of supervision of children's health. In 1927 the School Board added a dental hygienist.

While "the pure fresh air and open surroundings" of the borough doubtless contributed to Naugatuck's relatively good health record, we must also pay tribute to the town's doctors. In the fifty years before 1944 the position of the

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medical profession here changed much less than in bigger cities. Lack of a hospital and public clinics kept doctors in the role of general practitioners making house visits to their patients and acting in the psychologically valuable capacity of confidant and friend as well as healer. The competent "country" doctors who served the town with devotion and intelligence compensated for their lack of specialists' knowledge by common sense, familiarity with the daily lives of their patients, and warm personal feelings for their well-being. The physicians perhaps more than any other one group were able to carry over into mid-twentieth century the direct neighborliness that the hurry and mounting impersonality of peoples' jobs had partly destroyed. Confidence in the rightness of local doctors probably offset somewhat the general tendency to procrastinate about public health measures.

The slowness with which the borough undertook responsibility for public health was not due to callousness but to concern over the expense. Since most men owned their own homes, as taxpayers they were anxious to keep the tax rate low. As everywhere in the United States, the cost of municipal administration was mounting with dizzying speed. The town debt of \$2,862 in 1874 had grown to \$170,923 by 1895, and by 1923 the borough debt was \$340,741. Taxable property had of course also increased in value. The "Grand List" of 1874 read \$1,541,283, whereas that of 1923 was \$17,297,620. But if borough expenses continued to rise even that figure must look small. In effort to establish borough finances on a sound basis, refunding bonds were issued in 1923, in 1931 trunk line bonds, and in 1934 another series of refunding bonds. By the spring of 1939 the funded debt from a peak of over \$500,000 had been brought down to \$450,000; the total debt was \$610,027. Ordinary expenses plus expenditures for permanent improvements that year ran to nearly \$543,000. Nearly every year brought greater public charges which New England thrift, exercised to its utmost,



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could not evade without loss of essential services to the community.

Nor could the borough consistently raise taxes without danger to its citizens' livelihood. In 1898 when the rubber regenerating plant burned, involving a loss of over half a million dollars, company officials announced that they intended to rebuild it elsewhere where taxes were lower. Anxiously the Warden and Burgesses angled for reconsideration, only to be met with the flat pronouncement that unless valuations of the shoe company and reclaiming plant combined were set at not more than \$1,000,000, Naugatuck would lose the regenerating plant. The freemen, called into special meeting, argued the pros and cons vigorously. Reduction by \$141,000 of the United States Rubber Company's assessment meant either a higher tax rate or higher valuations on other property in the borough. Was having the plant here worth the concession? Reluctantly the majority concluded that it was, and voted a five-year abatement of the earlier valuation. Since Naugatuck wished to expand its industries, it dared not kill the goose that laid the golden egg. The action was amply justified by time: by 1933 all Naugatuck property of the United States Rubber Company was listed at over seven and a half million dollars. Still the Board of Trade, set up in 1906 to advertise Naugatuck's advantages for manufacturing, had constantly to consider whether any new enterprise established here could give full returns in employment to offset possible costs to the public in terms of services demanded.

For steadiness of employment for Naugatuck's residents was of course the key to prosperity. The depression of the nineties was not acutely felt in Naugatuck. Industrial unemployment in 1894 and 1895 was countered by a borough program of public works, including digging the first public sanitary sewers, widening and paving streets, and laying some sidewalks. When in 1907 and again in 1920-21 brief periods of slack work came in the shops, distress for working people

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was not long-enduring. Indeed the greater expense of poor relief following World War I the Superintendent of the Poor attributed to the after-effects of the "plague of influenza" which in the fall of 1918 struck Naugatuck with unusual ferocity, mowing down the breadwinners in many families and forcing whole households into dependence upon public aid. In these circumstances, when disaster seemed to be clearly an act of God, the borough abandoned publication of the names of persons receiving public assistance. Since at least seventy of the one hundred families dependent on public support in 1920-21 traced their predicament to the influenza epidemic, human decency dictated saving them the humiliation of having their names entered into the annual published borough reports, and, the Superintendent added, "We hope by this method that morbid curiosity and petty jealousy can in part be done away with." Thereafter until 1930 poor relief shrank.

But the depression of the thirties was another story. In every manufacturing community in America the situation was much the same, and Naugatuck fared far better than most. Yet the community of some 3,700 families in the winter of 1934-35 was giving aid to 717 families, 3,140 persons, over a fifth of the whole population of the borough. An Unemployment Fund created by private citizens in 1930 helped reduce distress and at the same time furthered a number of civic improvements, but the burden upon the community touched both the purse and the heart. Federal and state funds eased the financial obligations upon the local administration, but the welfare budget consumed over \$76,000 at the height of the depression and even in 1937 about \$57,000.

No one could wish to revert to the era of town government when poor relief devolved in some measure upon kindly neighbors, when sanitation consisted of private sewer systems or cesspools and outhouses, when epidemics ran their course yearly without investigation of health officers, when garbage was collected from private householders by farmers



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who fed it to their pigs, when fire and police protection was nominal only, and street lighting, public water mains, and paving nonexistent. But public assumption of these services was costly, and occasionally citizens boggled over shouldering any new financial burden.

The heaviest single obligation upon the community from beginning to end was its schools. In schoolhouses alone the borough seemed always to be falling short of what was required, in spite of the extensive building program carried out in the last years of the town. Citizens in 1894 expected that John Howard Whittemore's gift of the Salem School would relieve the Center District of any expense for new schools for some years thereafter, but within three years school population had again increased enough to make imperative some additional space. Two more schoolhouses in the Center were built before 1898 and a private school, the Academy of the Sacred Heart in Waterbury, took some Roman Catholic children. And still the schools were overcrowded. At this point St. Francis parish came to the rescue by building its own parochial school. Any reluctance citizens felt at having schoolchildren now segregated on religious lines was generally submerged by relief at being freed of further public expense. Want of a high school building by the turn of the century was again met by the individual generosity of John H. Whittemore who not only paid out of his own pocket for its erection but donated \$40,000 for maintenance. The roomy new high school, equipped with laboratories, a manual training room, a kitchen for domestic science courses, a large auditorium, a gymnasium, and eight airy classrooms, was placed under the direction of a borough committee and made available to schoolchildren from all districts. Soon after the completion of the high school the Pond Hill and the Middle Districts each built a small new house, the former one-room, the latter two.

Nineteen hundred ten marked the end of the public school building program for the next thirty-five years. In

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the interim, to be sure, one or two rooms were added on to existing schools; St. Hedwig's Roman Catholic parish opened its own parochial school; and in 1916 the dilapidated, unsanitary old schoolhouse in Union City was replaced. But the new Hop Brook School was a replacement rather than an additional building. The old building had no furnace and, like five other of the twelve public schoolhouses in the borough, had only privies instead of flush toilets. Furthermore, it was significant that the new Hop Brook School was not built by the public but was erected and given to the district by one private citizen. When Harris Whittemore alone shouldered the cost of the new building his fellow citizens welcomed the gift just as they had when his father gave the Salem School and the high school to the borough. But except for the two tiny schools of outlying districts, from 1897 on the people of Naugatuck themselves never had to pay the bills for a new school.

While we must recognize the generosity that prompted these gifts, it is still necessary today to appraise the effect of this benevolent paternalism upon the borough as a whole. The perpetuation of the district system down to 1921 which made building in one district no affair of the residents of any other probably partly explains people's failure to realize that they were delegating to one family what was the responsibility of the whole community. But whatever the basic reason, the fact remains that Naugatuck for nearly fifty years relied upon private philanthropy instead of public support for some of its most urgent public wants. The New England town that in 1844 demanded full local self-government had unwittingly let slip out of its grasp some of its former proud independence. When federal income taxes began to make impossible the individual gifts of large sums of money and the borough was thrown back completely upon its own resources, the unaccustomed burden staggered the community. Gift of the Bronson B. Tuttle homestead to Naugatuck and its conversion in 1938 into a high school annex



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postponed for a few years the day of reckoning, but before World War II was over the school department was having to face a new situation, the need of more school space and only the public purse to finance it.

Members of the Board of Education did sense some of the implications of this situation, for in 1938 at their request the Superintendent of Schools made an analysis of public support of education in Naugatuck compared with that in other Connecticut towns. His report, starting with a summary of the Whittemore family gifts, showed that Naugatuck stood midway between Connecticut's best and worst. Though per high school student the borough spent annually about \$148 as compared to an average of \$184 for all Connecticut towns, Naugatuck's ratio on school taxation to numbers of children attending placed this community among the top third in the state. But the fact that the School Board called for the comparative data indicated that its members felt all was not well.

Mounting school expenses were not of course increased over the fifty-year period only by demand for more and better equipped buildings. A more extensive curriculum in both the grades and the high school meant a larger teaching staff, quite apart from the greater number of teachers required to instruct the greater number of pupils. Offering drawing, music, domestic science, manual training, and physical education obliged the Superintendent of Schools to hire men or women qualified to teach these special subjects: Opening evening schools for illiterate adults or foreigners who could neither read nor write English added new costs to the school department's budget, as did the kindergartens started in 1898, and 1903. Physical inspection by school physicians and employment of a public school nurse also increased school expenses. After 1906 a truant officer had to be paid. Moreover, first in 1914, again in 1917, 1918, 1919, and 1920 salary schedules for teachers were raised. Set at \$450 a year minimum and \$700 maximum in 1914, by 1920, in order to engage competent people, the scale had to be set

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at \$1,000 minimum and \$1,600 maximum. Seven years later women high school teachers might be paid up to \$2,000 and men as much as \$2,500.

So appropriations for schools rose steadily, from \$20,932 in 1893 to \$57,870 twenty years later, and then with the jump in salaries to \$192,150 in 1923. The figures in 1940 were set at \$216,000. Where twenty-six teachers sufficed to teach about a thousand children in 1893, eighty-six teachers were employed in 1920 and eighty-nine in 1940 for about 2,420 and 2,367 enrollments respectively. Cost per child in relation to average attendance grew from \$18.66 to \$113.00 in fifty years. State law in 1911 required school certificates for children between the ages of fourteen and sixteen before permitting employers to hire them, and in 1920 stipulated a minimum of eight grades of schooling. Such measures brought school enrollment to new peaks, though in years gone by, whenever business depression brought a slackening of manufacturing activity to this industrial city, school attendance had automatically improved. Most noticeable was the effect of periodic decreased employment upon enrollment in the high school. When the new high school was opened there were 141 pupils registered; in 1916, 358, in 1918, 341, in 1920, 402; in the depression year of 1933 over 800. As was the case in every industrial community, the cost of operating the schools was always highest in years when the municipality amid business depression was least able to raise its budget. In 1932 the state set sixteen as the earliest age at which a child might leave school, and thus again the taxpayers' burden was increased. A falling birthrate during the depression years later reduced enrollment in the elementary grades but did not affect the high school before 1942. There the all-time high in attendance was 1,000 students reached in 1938-39.

Consolidation of the districts into a borough school system in 1920 helped to improve the standard of schooling, particularly outside the Center, and was economical of both money and effort. That the borough was so tardy in accept-



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ing the unification is indeed hard to understand, especially in view of the urgency with which the School Board pleaded for the change year after year. A Superintendent of Schools for the whole borough was voted in 1903 and with the opening of the new high school a borough high school committee. But when in 1905 the abolition of districts came up for vote, the freemen again rejected it, although the Board of Education pointed out that of 1,557 New England towns only eighty-four clung to the antiquated district scheme. Nine years later only fourteen towns, all in Connecticut, had refused consolidation. Naugatuck, for all its civic pride, was one of the very last to adopt the more efficient administrative plan.

Notwithstanding this arch-conservatism and the somewhat penurious attitude of many taxpayers toward the schools, the education offered in the borough unquestionably broadened in scope and improved in quality as the years went on. Long tenure of office gave the superintendents accumulated experience on which to draw. Frank W. Eaton held the post from its creation to 1918 and Harold E. Chittenden from that year to the present, a continuity which contrasted favorably with the rapid turnover in school principals which had characterized the preceding decades. Continuity of policy in the high school was further guaranteed by the long term of the principal appointed in 1903, Charles P. Slade, who served the school until 1945. Warmly supported by a succession of interested men on the Board of Education, both superintendents introduced a series of sound changes over the years, revision of the course of studies, careful differentiation in grading, and more exacting standards of teaching.

In teaching music the borough schools were in the van. Singing was taught in most public schools in America before 1900, but few towns developed so well rounded a program as Naugatuck where, it is possible, interest derived straight from the singing societies that early in the nineteenth century had played a large part in community social life.

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Or perhaps what Naugatuck schoolchildren achieved may be credited to the enthusiasm of William H. Miner, the Director of Music in the schools for over twenty years. In 1925 he organized a school band and then a school orchestra, to both of which children and parents alike gave unfailing support.

In the more strictly academic subjects also the school authorities offered a widening choice. For non-college preparatory students they set up a commercial course, at first beginning in the seventh grade and carried on through the high school years, later confined to a three-year high school course. After 1920 the high school limited its courses to three, a commercial, a general, and a college preparatory. The commercial course students inevitably outnumbered others in this mill city, but growth in the college preparatory classes was rapid, encouraged perhaps by a scholarship fund for assisting able boys and girls to go on to college. Before the end of the 1930's when overcrowding began to affect the amount of individual attention a student could receive, most Naugatuck children who could go at all went to college straight from the local high school.

The unity of social outlook this common schooling gave two generations of Naugatuck boys and girls was an asset the borough could ill afford to lose. In the classroom future mill executives and future clerks sat side by side. Adrian Greenburg, who was to become the famous Hollywood designer, Adrian, rubbed elbows with boys whose wives would never be able to aspire to more than a poor copy of an Adrian gown. The Engelhardt brothers, Nicholas and Fred, in later years both significant figures in the world of American education, studied their algebra and *L'Allegro* in company with contemporaries whose horizons would never reach beyond the Naugatuck valley. Themes written by future mill hands competed with essays of the future noted sports writer of the *New York Herald Tribune*, "Harry" Cross. George B. Hotchkiss, today head of a department of New York Uni-



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versity's School of Commerce and Finance, like Mary E. Wells, Vassar's distinguished mathematician, and Seth Bingham, composer and member of the Columbia University faculty, found companionship in Naugatuck schoolrooms with boys and girls destined to no special distinction. It was common public schooling of an invaluable order even if not of the very highest academic quality.

Unfortunately failure of the borough to expand the teaching staff enough to keep pace with the growth of the school population, and so to permit of the effective but more expensive methods of individual teaching, gradually lowered the standing of the school. Cramped quarters and insufficient equipment for the numbers attending by the end of the thirties added to difficulties. After 1939 there came to be increasing dissatisfaction with the high school. Still it is conjectural whether proportionately more children than formerly were sent away to college preparatory and finishing schools.

In the grade schools, the superintendents and teachers succeeded somewhat better in maintaining a comparatively high standard. Tests and promotions twice a year were decreed in order to make grading more accurate and to enable teachers to push along rapidly the gifted pupil at no loss to the plodders. Yet apparently in practice promotions came only once a year. In 1902 the so-called departmental system was introduced into the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades, a sensible scheme which provided for each teacher's instructing in a special field instead of teaching all subjects of any grade. In 1914 the ninth grade was eliminated.

Professional standards for the teaching force were gradually raised. An experiment tried out at the end of the century whereby young women with no professional training were allowed to act as unpaid assistants in the schools was soon abandoned, and thereafter only persons with either normal school or college degrees were employed. In 1917 this practice became formal policy. Inasmuch as giving local

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women the first chance at any vacancy in the local schools was already customary, strictness about professional qualifications was wise. But Naugatuck, like other New England communities, suffered from the tacit ban on the employment of married women as teachers. So here, as elsewhere in America, the schools were staffed largely by unmarried women. Women teachers, conscientious, often uninspired, and, in spite of the occasional salary raises, underpaid compared to male teachers and to women in other professions, grew weary and old in public service. Yet women like Grace Cross, Mary King, Sarah Smith, and Josephine Maher in the grade schools, Anna E. Hopkins in the high school, and many others gave each successive generation of Naugatuck schoolchildren a solid elementary education and in some pupils aroused true intellectual curiosity.

Educating the children who attended school regularly was easier than forcing children to attend. Although in the 1870's the Center District had appointed a truant officer for several years, later his job was discontinued. Not until 1906 did the borough again act to curb truancy. The task was a trying one. Sometimes it was difficult to convince foreign parents that the public had any right to interfere with their sending their children to work in the factories, even though the children were under fourteen. When state law required evidence of a satisfactory amount of schooling for any child under sixteen who sought a work certificate and a later law stipulated that every such child must attend continuation school through the eighth grade, the problem became still more difficult. The truant officer's duties most often took him to the doors of the poorest families in town where the earnings of children as well as adults were badly needed. But his investigations soon brought to light the fact that not indifference to schooling but lack of proper clothing kept many children at home. Discovery that there were tens of children without shoes to wear to school came as a shock to the borough. Donations of clothing collected by women of



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the churches or the Board of Charities helped, but stark poverty continued to play a part in reducing regular school attendance. The attendance officer consistently reported that voluntary truancy, unlike the cases in the 1870's, accounted for a small fraction of the total. Still, concerted effort by truant officer, Board of Education, teachers, church groups, and individuals gradually improved the situation, so that cases dropped from nearly 1700 in 1908 to about 375 fifteen years later. Temporary increase in truancy stemming from the evening schools in 1918-19 was in time also reduced.

Naugatuck's evening schools became, as years went on, one of the borough's chief services to its people. The first evening classes opened in the winter of 1899-1900 were overwhelmingly popular. Six hundred men and women registered and average attendance was maintained at over 300, a record exceeded in Connecticut only by New Haven. In the next twenty years, however, this peak was not again reached. Enrollment rarely mounted to 250 people, and an average attendance of sixty was unusual. Classes were aimed at teaching English to men and women of foreign birth, though work in arithmetic, geography, and bookkeeping was also offered in some years, and for a short time manual training.

In 1916 when the war in Europe was threatening to involve the United States, the Board of Education made new efforts to promote the evening schools. The superintendent obtained from the federal Bureau of Labor lists of aliens applying for naturalization and then made contacts with these foreigners to explain the help the public evening schools could give. At the same time The Goodyear's Metallic Rubber Shoe Company offered prizes for the best attendance in adult education classes, volunteered to pay fifteen cents an hour to every foreign-born employee who attended, and in 1919-20 together with the glove company employed teachers to give classes in English and in citizenship the year round. The local chapter of the D.A.R. also offered prizes. Enroll-

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ment in the public evening courses jumped to about 450 in 1920, partly because boys and girls under the age of sixteen who had not completed the eighth grade had to attend. But general community interest was aroused and in 1922 the School Board appointed a Director of Americanization. For neither employers nor private citizens wished the borough to have an unassimilated body of people in its midst who could speak no English. By 1930, fifteen per cent of the population still was unable to read English; so evening school classes went on. Nearly ten years later enrollment in the elementary classes in English was higher than ever before; 362 registered. Doubtless passage of the federal Social Security Act accounts for much of this increase, for the advantage of citizenship became plain. As late as the winter of 1944 there were 217 people naturalized as the result of this Americanization program.

By 1933 elementary evening school courses were clearly not sufficient to meet all needs of adult education in the borough. That year consequently the Board of Education opened evening high school classes. The offerings varied from year to year according to demand. In the course of the next decade thirty-nine different subjects were taught, ranging from algebra and trigonometry to French and Italian. In the winter of 1938-39 over six hundred people were studying in the evening schools in addition to the 362 non-English speaking pupils, and twenty-two different classes ran all winter. Then as national defense plans got under way, vocational training began to play a larger part. Though typing, book-keeping, comptometry, and shorthand had for some years been taught as a matter of course in a city where big corporations like the United States Rubber Company and the Bristol Company needed large office staffs, after 1939 more specialized industrial training was wanted. Machine equipment for full trade school training was out of Naugatuck's reach, and for this people had to go to Waterbury. But classes in shop mathematics, blueprint reading and mechanical



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drawing were attended by all ages and people of all nationalities in town.

In 1893 Naugatuck already had a polyglot population, and in the decades that followed the proportion of foreign-born dropped only slowly. To the Irish who had poured in for two generations, to the Germans and the English cutlery-makers who came after the Civil War, to the Swedish iron-workers, imported for work in the foundry, were added Poles, Italians, Portuguese, Russians and Lithuanians. The Yankee town of earlier years by 1910 had peoples of nearly every European nationality. About thirty-three per cent foreign-born in 1900 had become thirty-one per cent in 1930, nineteen per cent in 1940. But in that year natives born of foreign parentage still greatly outnumbered third-generation Americans.

Probably because few of these foreign nationality groups were large, the formation of distinct colonies was not usual, though the Italians tended to congregate along South Main Street, while the Poles and Lithuanians thronged Union City. But if these peoples did not live in mutually exclusive neighborhoods, they nevertheless did quickly organize national societies, sometimes purely social, sometimes mutual benefit—Sons of Italy, Polish Falcons, Germania Maenner Chor, Knights of Maccabees, Order of Vasa Svea, St. George Lithuanian Society, and dozens of others, each usually with its women's auxiliary. Altogether in 1920 the Naugatuck *Directory* listed thirty-eight separate associations or clubs, in addition to twenty-six fraternal and benevolent societies. In 1928 a Rotary Club and in 1932 a Woman's Club appeared.

Not all of these groups of course were drawn on lines of nationality: Red Men, Odd Fellows, Sons of Veterans, the temperance societies, the Y.M.C.A., or the Young Men's Catholic Institute embraced members of widely different backgrounds. Their services in counteracting the influence of the still numerous saloons was particularly valuable. Of all these associations probably the Y.M.C.A. came to be the

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most all-inclusive. Started in 1895, it was not affiliated with the national organization and so was not bound to limit its membership by any religious dogma. The result was that Roman Catholics joined with Protestants in strengthening the Y.M.C.A., and the men who had started the Young Men's Catholic Institute in the seventies gradually transferred much of their support to the non-sectarian association. Priests and Protestant ministers alike promoted "Y" activities. Men and boys of many creeds and all social strata came to enjoy its facilities; they congregated in its reading rooms, they played on its athletic teams, and after the opening of the new building, used its gymnasium and swimming pool. Unlike the "Y" in many towns, here it served as a true community social center.

Important in the social structure though the fraternal societies and clubs were, they still were less basic than the churches. Puritans and Anglicans no longer dominated the religious life of the community, for three large Roman Catholic parishes, three Lutheran churches, a Methodist, and a National Polish church claimed far larger membership than Congregational and Episcopal. But rivalry between denominations withered away in the twentieth century, and was replaced by a rare spirit of co-operativeness. Not only was there none of the usual competitiveness between St. Francis Catholic church and the newer Polish Catholic St. Hedwig's or St. Mary's, there also continued to be every sign of the extraordinary mutual respect between Roman Catholics and Protestants that had characterized the nineteenth century. When the school bus system was started, the School Board unquestioningly provided transportation for parochial school children as for public school children, a service flatly denied in many New England towns. Collaboration between priests and parsons marked every civic undertaking for fifty years. Only less noteworthy were relations between different Protestant churches. While they vied with each other in well-doing, it was a wholly friendly rivalry. The



day of bitterness at a Brother's deserting the meeting house to join St. Michael's was gone. Furthermore, distrust of Episcopal ceremonial, of the vested choir, and the festive celebration of Anglican church holidays vanished as completely as had the inquisitorial attitude in the Congregational fold that had once provoked such trials as Brother Scott's and Brother Byington's.

To a surprising degree Naugatuck adhered to the simplicity of earlier days in all that touched its spiritual life. Churchgoing on Sunday remained the accepted pattern of behavior for people of all faiths, although the coming of automobiles and the habit of making out-of-town weekend trips affected congregations here as everywhere else in America. Attending mid-week prayer-meeting, however, gradually faded out as an essential part of Christian living. Instead members of every church dedicated time to social affairs which before 1890 would have been considered not properly the concern of a church at all. For example, in the early 1930's the Congregational church sponsored the Parish Players, a dramatic club, which staged plays once a month. Anyone over twenty years old in the whole town, regardless of religious affiliation, was invited to join. Ladies' Aid and Young People's societies, missionary groups, the Church Helpers, and others still carried on their good works, sometimes, when hard-pressed to raise money by the usual fairs, lawn fetes, and church suppers, resorting to novel entertainments. One year the women of St. Michael's advertised a Jewel Bazaar where the jewels belonging to some of the Church Helpers would be displayed. "These," wrote Mrs. Adelbert Tuttle later, "proved to be about a dozen sweet little girls dressed in white, dancing around a Maypole, a most attractive sight, more precious than the diamonds, rubies, etc., that were looked for." But after 1915 activities like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts occupied a larger place in the churches' scheme of things. Proofs of the change in fundamental points of view about what constituted Chris-

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tian behavior were the benefit bridge or bingo parties held after 1925 under the auspices of church groups. What a hundred years ago would have been labelled outright sin was now regarded as harmless diversion. Whatever made for wholesome neighborliness in the community could now be accepted as a function of the churches.

In adjusting to such new concepts, Naugatuck's congregations were helped by a succession of unusually long pastorates at St. Francis', St. Michael's and the Congregational church. Catholic and Protestant both benefited from having priest or parson ministering to their parishes uninterruptedly over many years, a continuity that enabled each to give a special contribution to the community. Three priests at St. Francis' after Father Fagan's death in 1896, five rectors at St. Michael's, and three Congregational ministers spanned the fifty-one years from 1893 to 1944.

In one field, however, once exclusively that of the churches, other agencies began to appear about 1900 when separate denominational units could no longer fully meet community needs. The first humanitarian undertaking that was sponsored by a group outside any one church was the Working Girls Club. Since the inspiration of this club came from a number of lonely young women working in the rubber shops who in banding together for their own benefit started a self-help group, the club in a sense was not a philanthropy at all. But to arrange for a meeting place and a teacher to give them instruction in fancy work, English literature, and arithmetic—their primary desires—the charter members had to enlist help. The person to come to their assistance was a teacher in the Salem School, Miss K. Maude Smith. Miss Smith not only arranged for the club to use a room in the Salem School and found people to teach but promptly interested other women in the town in the project.

In origin the club resembled the groups launched in the 1830's by New England girls working in the Lowell cotton mills, whose intellectual interests the *Lowell Offering* ex-



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pressed and whose attainments called forth the astonished admiration of Harriet Martineau. But the Naugatuck Working Girls Club soon ceased to be a wholly self-propelling organization. Money to expand its program could not come from its impecunious members, and yet its aim, providing these women with a richer social and intellectual life, was appealing. So well-to-do women of the community assumed financial responsibility. It is hard to know whether interest of the members wore off as other means of diversion became general in Naugatuck and as the public evening schools widened the scope of their classes, or whether the well-intentioned patronage of wealthier citizens stifled the initiative of the women for whom the club was meant. By 1920 its usefulness was largely a thing of the past and in 1921, after donating the remaining funds in the treasury to a community Christmas tree, the Working Girls Club went out of existence.

Meanwhile contact with members of the club had convinced Miss Gertrude Whittemore, always one of its staunchest supporters, that a great need in the borough was a decent place for homeless working women to live inexpensively. Like her father, John Howard, and her brother, Harris, Gertrude Whittemore felt strongly the obligations of wealth. At her own expense she built Hamilton House which opened its doors in 1907 to about thirty residents, some of them women working in the mills, some of them school teachers and office helpers. For a generation the house served much the purpose of a localized Y.W.C.A. Then as it ceased to fill any particular want in Naugatuck, it was sold for an ordinary rooming house.

More valuable to the community as a whole was the Day Nursery. This institution for thirty-five years was the chief charity in Naugatuck run neither by any church nor by the public Welfare Board. It originated in 1911 when a fire in a tenement house burned to death a little girl trying to prepare supper for her widowed mother before her return from work. Horror at the tragedy and a sense of common guilt

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that such a situation could arise in a civilized community brought prompt action. Mrs. Howard B. Tuttle immediately set herself to the task of raising money, finding a suitable building, and engaging a competent woman to take charge of the small children of working mothers. Other women threw themselves into the work and in a few weeks' time Naugatuck's Day Nursery was a reality. A succession of tender-hearted matrons took charge. They lacked professional training but their devotion to the children partly offset that disadvantage and made the nursery a happy place. About twenty-five children daily came to the Day Nursery—over six hundred altogether in the course of its thirty odd years. Financial support flowed in from men and women of all types, and their warm personal concern for the success of the project maintained it. In fact, every civic organization in the borough, from the Rotary Club to the Chamber of Commerce, always gave it vigorous backing. In 1942 when the Connecticut Committee for the Care of Children of Working Mothers listed the requirements of a properly run Child Care Center, Naugatuck women learned that their Day Nursery did not meet all these specifications. But though it lacked a fireproof house, by state standards had inadequate toilet and kitchen facilities, and omitted some desirable features in its program, the Naugatuck nursery still served Naugatuck working mothers well.

The other principal outlet for community generosity was through the Red Cross. The local chapter, chartered in 1917, enrolled nearly 11,000 people that first year and from that day to this never failed to "go over the top" on its fund drives, although its quota was always high. Still more significant was the wide-spread, deep interest in Red Cross service. Many communities during the excitement of the first World War organized Motor and Canteen Corps and made fine records in producing surgical dressings, knit socks and sweaters, but few kept any considerable program after the war. Women of the Naugatuck chapter, however, now turned their atten-



tion to local needs. Remodelling old clothes for European children in the bitter winters of 1919, 1920, and 1921 suggested a way of helping ignorant needy women in Naugatuck to help themselves. So the chapter rooms were opened to classes in sewing, and under the skillful direction of members of the "Production Corps" foreign women who had never before seen a sewing machine learned how to remake clothes for their own families. These classes had double benefit: women learned new useful economies and at the same time established direct relations with women of other social classes. Later when this particular project lapsed, other work took its place—Junior Red Cross, First Aid and Life Saving, and an especially active program of braille-transcription.

In the middle twenties the chapter opened a baby clinic where two Red Cross nurses weighed and measured the babies weekly and gave inexperienced mothers instruction in infant care. The ensuing decline in infant mortality was attributed in considerable part to this public service. The nurses acted also as community visiting nurses whose activities compensated in part for the lack of a hospital in the borough. So the Naugatuck Red Cross, by taking over some functions which in other cities were left to public agencies or to other philanthropic groups, occupied a peculiarly vital place in the community life. It provided the borough's only family welfare organization. Unlike many small chapters where work for the Red Cross was popular chiefly because it carried a special social prestige, the Naugatuck chapter could rely upon men and women who participated in its program because they were genuinely concerned for its success as a community enterprise.

But Naugatuck naturally did not give all its leisure to good works. For entertainment young and old gradually altered their habits in keeping with changes taking place in all America. As long as people customarily worked ten hours a day six days a week, diversions were necessarily few. On

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Sunday afternoons families went for walks or, if owners of horses and buggies, father, mother, and children drove out into the hills. When the electric street railway established inter-urban runs, an afternoon trolley ride, particularly on the open cars in summer, became a standard pastime. And then, as automobiles became common, the Sunday afternoon ride came to be the event of the week. Movies, first shown twice a month in the Gem Opera House and then once a week at a little theatre on Church Street, before about 1907 were not universally accepted as "quite nice." But prejudices melted away before the excitement of seeing "The Clutching Hand" and "The Perils of Pauline," where virtue never failed to triumph. When another movie house, the Alcazar theatre, opened in 1912, it was packed nightly to the doors just as the first one was.

Meanwhile the reduction of working hours by closing local factories at noon on Saturdays after 1912 brought new leisure and new recreations. Though in the past boys and men had always found some time to play ball, to bicycle, to swim, to skate, to fish or to hunt, a free afternoon every week now gave impetus to organized athletics. While members of the Naugatuck Fire Department from 1905 on had had active ball teams and had acquired an athletic field on which to play, most men in hard-working Naugatuck had had too little free time to join in. Now industrial leagues sprang up all through the valley and, whether men played or watched, they followed their own team's performance with passionate partisanship. High school athletics similarly gained in importance. Where teachers and pupils, together composing the high school teams of 1906 and 1907, played easy-going games with neighboring schools, ten years later the Naugatuck "High" was expected to play its hardest to win: Naugatuck honor was at stake. Stress on this kind of professional amateur athletics scarcely lessened until the war. After 1922 the high school coach, Peter Foley, developed a number of athletes who attained country-wide fame, notably Billy Burke, in



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1931 National Open Golf Champion, and Frank "Spec" Shea. Today Naugatuck takes particular pride in remembering the years that "Spec," now pitching for the New York Yankees, pitched for the Naugatuck High School.

Fortunately athletics and casual outdoor recreation were not limited to members of factory or school teams. Vacant lots and playgrounds near the schools gave little boys and big a chance to play catch, Baby in the Hole, Cops and Robbers, marbles, and other classic games, while the opening of the Recreation Field and then the golf links made tennis and golf available. Public acquisition of the Recreation Field, the nineteen and a half acres of Culver's Meadow along the east bank of the river south of the bridge, was the result of new awareness of the value of public playgrounds. When the Hop Brook School was built, Harris Whittemore, its donor, had laid out a school playground, equipped with swings and enough open space to give children room for games. The enthusiasm with which children used this convinced the taxpayers that playgrounds in other sections of the borough were highly desirable. So under the leadership of the new Chamber of Commerce seven thousand citizens raised \$68,000, bought the Recreation Field, and organized the Naugatuck Playground and Recreation Association. Later three smaller playgrounds near public schools were opened.

One consequence of these public parks was the new opportunity for girls to enjoy athletics more generally than had been possible when the classes in physical education once a week in the high school gym had been the only provision for girls. The good tennis courts and the volley ball and basketball fields soon were used as much by girls as by boys. After 1921 the Board of Education put directors in charge of the playgrounds every summer, so that supervised play became a regular part of the public recreation program. Somewhat later the playground directors focussed special attention on games and story hours for small children.

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Naugatuck's social life in one respect was unusual: at its top level, it was without snobbery. Not only did self-made men command civic respect, they were welcomed as social equals in the homes of the most sophisticated. Good manners born of "courtesy of the heart," honesty, and interest in Naugatuck, gave full social entree to people of humble origin and limited means. Such a situation was rare at any period in America, and particularly in industrial New England in an era when growing wealth was emphasizing class distinctions. In many cities when men had made money and were securely established in the business world, they tended to seek a part in the society world of larger communities where wealth fortified by taste opened up a widened stage. But Naugatuck's industrial leaders continued to find satisfaction in Naugatuck. Parties given in the roomy, dignified, unpretentious Whittemore house on North Church Street included citizens of all ranks and gradations of importance, and the Whittemore home for thirty years was the scene of a gracious, friendly hospitality that recognized no artificial social barriers. Here the fine paintings John Howard and Harris Whittemore acquired in Europe were open to view by anyone possessed of the interest and taste to enjoy them. The outgoing kindness of host and hostess extended its warmth to all who, like themselves, were devoted to the well-being of the community. In spite of later occasional uncertainty over the long-term benefits of Whittemore largesse to the borough, people in immediate contact with such friendliness could not be critical.

It is easy to understand why the death of John Howard Whittemore signified to his fellow townspeople the grievous end of an epoch. In the succeeding years the younger generation was unable to maintain the same degree of community social solidarity which simple neighborliness formerly had made so distinguished. New conditions in all America after World War I imposed inescapable change.

Following the first World War, as movies and radio broad-



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casts brought every American city and village into closer touch with every other, social life and diversions here began to adhere increasingly closely to the general American pattern. Miniature golf, ping-pong, roller-skating, badminton—each waxed and waned in popularity according to some inscrutable wave of fashion. Dancing parties, card parties, and later cocktail parties went on here just as in neighboring communities. Early in the 1920's the United States Rubber Company employees established a Recreation and Educational Association which conducted parties and picnics, and about 1935 girls employed in the offices started a Girls Club of their own. The Girls Club minstrel show became a great yearly event. Concerts and lectures run by the Congregational Parish House Association, the high school committee, or other semi-public organizations continued to command good audiences, although the tendency growing everywhere to shun "highbrow" functions cut in somewhat upon patronage of anything smacking of "uplift."

Still clubs devoted to serious matters held their own. The Woman's Club formed in 1932 had 248 members at the end of its first year, and a Delphian Society, that typical manifestation of American women's passion for self-improvement, answered the needs of some. Most important and oldest of all, the Women's Study Club maintained its place in Naugatuck's social life. Organized in 1894 "to promote general intelligence and culture," the charter members set themselves to develop Naugatuck's literary tastes. Every member was required every year to contribute a paper upon an assigned subject, ranging from the "Religions of the Orient" to the works of Dante. Once a year the club held an open meeting with an outside speaker, an orchestra, and a caterer. It was in 1916 when the club imported the Yale Dramatic Association to give Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, that the Yale coach, Monty Woolley, forecasting his part in *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, sprained his ankle. But both the annual open meeting and the fortnightly study sessions

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loomed large in the lives of club members. Election to membership, soon limited to sixty, for many years constitute the sure mark of social distinction.

Intellectual life, however, was not confined to the socially elite, if patronage of the public library be an index. In 1894 upon the completion of the Howard Whittemore Memorial Library—the fine, well-planned building that gave ample space for new books—the Library Committee and Miss Ellen Spencer, the librarian, made a careful selection of books that would appeal to Naugatuck's diverse, rather cosmopolitan population. Thought spent on acquisitions built up the original 900 volumes to a well-rounded collection of 10,000 which circulated rapidly. Endowed by John Howard Whittemore with a fund, later increased by his daughter, the library was never dependent upon public support. But citizens were appreciative. Here Thomas Sugrue, later to make his mark as a distinguished novelist, spent long hours avidly absorbing from the books spread before him some of the wisdom that was to color his own writings and particularly enrich *Stranger in the Earth*. Other readers were scarcely less eager. Fifty years after the new library opened about 3,700 men and women were regularly borrowing its books. When a separate children's library made rearrangement of the adult library feasible, open stacks added to its usefulness. Now anyone might roam past the shelves to select whatever pricked his imagination, a scheme, librarians had learned, that often aroused a curiosity not stirred by reading a title in a card catalogue. At the same time a special committee weeded out volumes no longer of interest in order to make room for works of more permanent value.

While fiction was the mainstay of the collection, there were also many books only less in demand covering a wide field of cultural and scientific subjects. The growing range of the public's reading interests suggests a steady enlargement of intellectual horizons. Perhaps particularly admirable was the collection of manuscript and printed materials



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bearing on local history. This appealed alike to genealogist, antiquarian, and schoolchild, and was a source of information heavily drawn on when citizens presented their centennial pageant in 1944. Books in foreign languages of current interest to the Polish, Portuguese, Lithuanian or Italian-born people in the borough became another feature. Later this supply was supplemented through regular inter-library lending among several of the smaller town libraries of the vicinity, so that the variety of reading available for people with a meagre command of English was greatly increased.

The Children's Library, given by Miss Gertrude Whittemore in 1928, was moved two years later into the building next to the main library in quarters originally built by the Naugatuck National Bank. Donor and staff gave utmost attention to making the rooms attractive and the 3,600 books of the best. Every week a children's story hour was held. Naugatuck children from homes of every class quickly learned what pleasure awaited them here, and a circulation of nearly 33,000 children's books every year proved that the younger generation was making the most of this opportunity.

So wider reading, frequent movies, the radio, and more personal contacts with the world outside wiped out much of the provincialism of the town of the nineteenth century. The nearly fifty years since the establishment of borough government had seen many changes, some plainly visible, others more subtle. Changes in physical appearance had been accompanied by an increase in population to about two and a half times the number here in 1890 and of far greater diversity of background. New points of view about public responsibilities had emerged along with new concepts of what constituted a satisfying social life. How had these developments affected citizens' attitudes toward Naugatuck as a community?

Belief that the town had much to offer to industrial America had prompted campaigns to bring in new industry, and citizens in the nineties frequently advertised the peculiar

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advantages of living in this borough, beautifully located in the New England hills, easily accessible to big cities of the seaboard. Satisfaction with what already existed did not interfere with plans for improvement. Community action had built the Whittemore Bridge. Community enthusiasm in 1919 launched a great homecoming celebration for the 836 servicemen returned from the war, a gala occasion which had included a huge parade, luncheon on the green, and a pleasant final ceremony of presentation of a gold medal to each veteran. The atmosphere of this fifth of July welcome home was that of a united community, proud of its past, interested in its present, hopeful for its future.

But in the next twenty years some of this unanimity of feeling disappeared. The same thing was happening in other small American cities. Criticism stemmed both from young men born and bred here, who went off to school and college and then to jobs elsewhere, and from men who came from other towns to the local laboratories and mills. As greater ease of travel made opportunities to compare Naugatuck with other cities, some young people, irked at the limitations of the social life of so small and so industrialized a community, failed to find Naugatuck ideal. Disapproval voiced by departed native sons was recognized as unimportant and sometimes indiscriminating; it was the common lot of small cities. More disturbing was the attitude of newcomers. For the greater transiency among junior executives and laboratory technicians, an increasingly common phenomenon in American industrial towns, was giving an impermanence to the top levels of Naugatuck's population. Whereas one hundred and two hundred years ago it was the craftsmen or the laborers that were the journeymen, the transients, now factory operatives were relatively stable and the rank above moved about. Among the upper hierarchy the result was a more critical citizenry, but a group not always ready to take responsibility and unwilling to make efforts to change what they disliked.



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Equally disconcerting to people concerned with Naugatuck's future was the tendency of people of means to build homes outside the borough. Residence in the charming old hill towns nearby, Middlebury or Woodbridge or Oxford, had natural attractions that industrial Naugatuck could not offer. But Naugatuck by these removals of influential people lost both income from taxable improvements and the intangible support and interest that any citizen gives to the community in which he lives. The automobile made much of this commuting inevitable. Like a big city into which suburban dwellers pour daily to earn their livings, Naugatuck more than formerly became the place of business to which every morning people flocked but from which they departed again at the end of the working day. Though this draining of vitality from the community was slow, by 1940 it was perceptible.

But another factor affecting local attitudes, more subtle, more difficult to identify, but probably more far-reaching, was the change in citizens' thinking about the United States Rubber Company. When in the late twenties centralized control of the separate units that made up the United States Rubber Company began to go into effect, Naugatuck awoke to the realization that its most important industry was absentee-owned. For nearly forty years, to be sure, ownership had not been centered in Naugatuck, but as long as the local plants were managed by old residents, Frederick F. Schaffer and W. T. Rodenbach, survivors of the days of independence, citizens had cherished the illusion that the company was a local concern. Although theoretically people had long known that Naugatuck's rubber industry was only one small segment of a very much larger whole, full recognition of that fact had been slow. Now the confident pride in Naugatuck's importance began to be shaken. Company officials in New York would determine policies for Naugatuck, not local leaders. True, company directors continued to appoint Naugatuck men to positions as superintendents and managers.

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But citizens sensed a difference: it was company interests first, Naugatuck's second. Company executives here were bound by decisions of non-resident heads in whose view the plant in Naugatuck, original rubber town of America, was but one of many.

So Naugatuck discovered that it could expect no more special consideration than any other of the more than twenty cities where the United States Rubber Company operated great plants. Contribution to a public project in Naugatuck might involve similar support in other communities. Individual employees of course might give to the Y.M.C.A. or the Day Nursery or the Recreation Association or the Centennial Celebration fund, but a gift from the corporation was out of the question. The corporation could point to its generous pension plan for its own over-age employees and could reasonably contend that care for its own workers, past and present, constituted its only obligation to the town; the rest was a matter for individual citizens. But because the Eastern Malleable Iron Company, the Risdon Manufacturing Company, Peter Paul, all the smaller companies, even the Bristol Company located in southern Waterbury not in Naugatuck at all, invariably gave company support to any undertaking calculated to make Naugatuck a more wholesome place in which to live, citizens were annoyed at the refusal of the rubber company to do the same.

Doubtless few people engaged in raising money for civic projects considered the alternative. As a concern in which the DuPont interest was large, the United States Rubber Company was peculiarly vulnerable to any charge of dictating local affairs in towns where it was the largest employer. Wilmington had often been labelled a "Company town" and all the state of Delaware a pocket borough of the DuPont family. It was certainly a defensible policy, therefore, for the United States Rubber Company carefully to avoid the whisper of a suspicion that it was using its position in Naugatuck to convert it into a company town. Non-participation



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in community affairs was the logical consequence. But this fact notwithstanding, during the 1930's many citizens of the borough felt chilled by the shadow of absentee ownership. Not until war broke out and the necessity of community solidarity became evident did the company alter its policy.

Long-time residents were still happy to live in Naugatuck and most people maintained an ultimate faith in its future. But in spite of the borough's employment record during the depression, the one-time optimistic self-confidence that had given the community vigor had somewhat ebbed before World War II dawned. That as a result of this appalling world tragedy new vitality was to be infused into Naugatuck and many other American manufacturing cities is one of the grim paradoxes of history.

## CHAPTER X

### *Industrial Expansion, 1893-1921*

THE changes in mode of life and social attitudes that took place in Naugatuck after 1893 in large part grew out of the expansion and changes in the borough's industrial life. As in any manufacturing city the tempo of developments quickened or slowed as business prosperity rose or fell. The year 1893 marked the beginning of a business depression in America from which most manufacturing communities did not recover until after the defeat of Bryan, champion of the Silver Standard, in 1896. But in spite of a shut-down in the rubber shops for a period of weeks in the winter of 1893-94, and in spite of some reduction of force in other Naugatuck plants, there is little evidence that Naugatuck suffered sharply from any general contraction of business.

The small shops along the brooks had been closing down one after the other for a decade and more, and those that remained in 1893 largely disappeared in the course of the next few years. Obsolescence of equipment and change in demand made it economically unsound to continue manufacture there. Soon after 1900 only the Smith button factory remained in operation on the upper stretches of Fulling Mill brook, while at its mouth, where Homer Twitchell had run his factory, the Naugatuck Manufacturing Company, moved from Millville, was turning out copper floats for an America already beginning to pride itself on the universality of the plumbing in its growing cities. On Beacon Hill brook a sawmill alone remained; the Ward brothers' curtain-ring shop was closed out when Lauren Ward died in 1897; on Hop brook none of the smaller enterprises continued. In the flats the foundry had engulfed every other activity. Only



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in Millville on Long Meadow brook did a succession of small shops carry on. These changes were, however, not the result of business depression but the culmination of the process of elimination which had been evident in the 1880's.

Although, with most of the small shops gone, Naugatuck's manufacturing for the next twenty years was centered on rubber and malleable iron, in this period one new industry emerged connected with neither, namely, the making of scientific recording instruments. This venture, begun in 1892 when the Bristol Company opened its plant in Platts Mills, was good for Naugatuck because any new factory meant more jobs, more money, more prestige. But the importance of the Bristol Company went much further: it foreshadowed a whole new era in American industry, the day of manufacture based upon scientific research. People in Naugatuck did not at once realize that here was a tremendous innovation. It was not peculiar to Naugatuck; elsewhere in America similar undertakings were taking shape about this time. But the Bristol Company's introduction of its line here placed Naugatuck among the communities where recognition of the role of science applied to manufacture came early. And this was to affect the future development of the borough.

In the nineteenth century Naugatuck's factories had turned out reputable goods, superior sometimes because of the training and skill of the workmen, sometimes because of ingenious machinery, sometimes because of special processes. The buttons and small hardware made along Fulling Mill and Beacon Hill brooks depended for quality upon the people employed in the shops; the Twitchell safety-pins and the Ward curtain rings were the product of special machines; the malleable castings and the vulcanized rubber of the larger plants had a country-wide reputation because the men in charge of manufacture in the critical stages had "secret" formulae to guide them. At the shoe shop the foreman of the vulcanizing room is said to have summoned the plant

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superintendent every morning when it was time to prepare a special mixture to add to the rubber. The superintendent's book in which the "magic" formula was written down was locked up in the company safe every night, and the mixing of the compound was a one-man ritual. The superintendent's witch-doctoring over the compounds by 1890 was of course partly a ceremonial joke within the plant, but some belief lingered that only the processes worked out amid secrecy and sifted by experience could continue to guarantee the best quality to Goodyear's Metallic Rubber shoes. Discovering by laboratory research what elements had specific chemical effects was of course not unheard of, but the immediate application of scientific research to manufacturing was still new.

So the launching of the Bristol Company was in fact a milestone. It represented the kind of enterprise that in the twentieth century was to give Naugatuck its basic occupational diversification—production of highly specialized articles developed from scientific formulae. Like the Naugatuck Manufacturing Company, the Risdon Company, and the Lewis Engineering Company of a later time, even more markedly the Bristol Company was rooted in detailed knowledge of modern physics and chemistry. Science focussed upon industry gave birth to each of these newer companies.

The originator of the basic idea behind the Bristol Company, William H. Bristol, was a professor of mathematics at Stevens Institute in Hoboken, New Jersey, when he hit upon a new way of lacing together strips of leather belting. Immediately seeking out his father and brothers in Naugatuck, he presented his ideas; the family organized the Bristol Company, and, employing one man, began operations in Frank Bristol's barn in Naugatuck. The belt-lacing sold quickly and enabled the family three years later to set up a factory in Platts Mills, just over the Naugatuck line in South Waterbury. Meanwhile Professor Bristol had turned his attention to a truly scientific problem, devising a continu-



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ously-recording pressure gage, and next a temperature recorder. By the time of the World's Fair in 1893 the company had successfully manufactured both of these and had also ready for exhibit in Chicago instruments to measure and record fluctuations of electric voltages, amperes, and watts. Since electrification of American industry and American homes was just beginning, the demand for the recording devices was immediate and grew with every year.

Death of one of the Bristol brothers in 1904 brought about a splitting of the company when family controversy arose about division of financial controls, but later the breach was healed. In 1908 Professor Bristol brought out a line of low-resistance millivoltmeter pyrometers which were to be of the utmost importance to American industry. Use of a base-metal thermocouple instead of platinum laid the foundation for a complete line of indicating and recording instruments at once accurate, dependable, and relatively inexpensive. Utility companies as well as manufacturers of a wide variety of commercial products, ranging from automobiles to household wares, needed the Bristol instruments. To these scientific items the company added in 1913 manufacture of hollow safety set screws of unique design, and in World War I a series of airplane instruments—air speed indicators, pilot tubes, recording thermometers, and gages for dirigibles. So employment for Naugatuck people in the Platts Mills factory mounted steadily. Though the inventive William Bristol after 1920 dedicated prolonged research to a scheme for synchronizing sound recordings with movie film, his failure to design a mechanism saleable to the movie industry did not affect the company's prosperity.

Meanwhile the Naugatuck Malleable Iron Company also grew in importance. After 1898 Beardsley brackets, the galvanized or japanned metal fixtures used to connect the glass insulators to telephone poles or buildings, expanded operations considerably. By 1903 the foundry was running six furnaces. In 1912 the incorporation of the Eastern Mal-

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leable Iron Company which combined the interests of the Naugatuck foundry with its offshoots in Troy, Bridgeport, New Britain, and Wilmington, resulted in bringing to Naugatuck a centralized purchasing department for all the five foundries of the corporation, and in 1916 a Research Department. The chemical and physical tests carried on in the laboratory, tests of mechanical equipment, of coal, sands, refractories, and other raw materials, and design of melting and annealing furnaces gave Naugatuck new stature. For now not only was the borough the seat of a successful foundry, it was a center of metallurgical research. Hereafter, like the Bristol Company, the foundry built for its future upon scientific knowledge. During the first World War government contracts, primarily for cast metal envelopes for hand and rifle grenades, pre-empted much of the company's output and later necessitated a considerable readjustment to peacetime production.

An accompaniment of the war fervor that pervaded the foundry was the growth of new company-sponsored, social activities. In 1918 the company erected a recreation hall for employees. A foundry Drum Corps, supplied by the company with uniforms and instruments, organized in October 1918 and played enthusiastically at rallies and parades all through that winter. At the great welcome-home celebration for Naugatuck's servicemen in July 1919 the foundry band won special applause. Before the end of the war foundry bowling teams also were formed and in the spring of 1919 a baseball nine that played teams from other factories in the neighborhood. To perpetuate the new esprit de corps the company started *Smiles*, a shop newspaper, later renamed *Malleable News*. But a good many people came to feel that such things smacked too strongly of company paternalism, and later much of this so-called "welfare work" was dropped. The Recreation building was leased for other purposes and was eventually sold.



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Heads of the foundry, as time wore on, showed increasing sensitiveness to public opinion. Before the war the contract system of labor was abandoned and all men became company, not contractors', employees. Moreover, the fact that all the officers of the Eastern Malleable Iron Company made their homes in Naugatuck assured the community that its welfare would be a consideration in corporation policy. Men in charge were mostly the second generation of the founders, younger Tutties, Whittemores, Hopkins, and Warners, men brought up by their fathers with a sense of their responsibility in the community, and, perhaps more vital, an understanding of what Naugatuck working people had contributed to the success of their forebears. A number of younger men from outside the valley were also brought in, among them of course the laboratory staff, but the newcomers came quickly to realize that company officers regarded the prosperity of the town and of the foundry inextricably linked.

Of even more far-reaching consequences than developments at the foundry were the changes after 1893 in Naugatuck's rubber industry. Ultimately and fundamentally the greatest change came with the merging of The Goodyear's Metallic Rubber Shoe Company with other rubber companies to form the United States Rubber Company in 1892. But, as noted in Chapter VIII, Naugatuck felt no immediate effects from having its largest single manufacturing corporation become a unit of a new holding company. The merger was the natural outcome of competition among rubber manufacturers in the latter part of the nineteenth century and was intended to induce competitors to pool their resources instead of cutting each other's throats. Two years after the shoe company the glove company entered the combine. Only one new concern, located just over the Naugatuck line in Beacon Falls, the Beacon Falls Shoe Company, organized by George A. Lewis and others in 1898, maintained some independence for a number of years. But this too was absorbed

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in 1930. Otherwise all Naugatuck's rubber shops were tied in with the United States Rubber Company, although the reclaiming unit was not formally included until 1913.

Still the local companies continued to be run in fashion that seems curious today to anyone bred in the concept that, wherever possible, co-operation should replace competition: the shoe shop continued to compete with the glove shop within Naugatuck, and both competed with other United States Rubber plants. The superintendent of each ran his own shop, adhering to his own particular principles of management, just as he had in 1890. Fortunately William T. Rodenbach, Adna Warner, and Frederick F. Schaffer, who were responsible for the company's performance down to the time of World War I, were all men of vigor and intelligence and all interested citizens of Naugatuck. Under their direction the rubber shops here were Naugatuck shops first and United States Rubber Company units second, an enormously significant situation.

Under the presidency of Colonel Samuel Colt, nephew of Colt of fire-arms fame, plant rivalry within the corporation was somewhat reduced, and in 1917 the two Naugatuck companies were combined into one as the Naugatuck Footwear Division of the United States Rubber Company. But the new general manager, Charles T. McCarthy, appointed in 1919, like his predecessors was a long-time resident of Naugatuck. A tall, even-tempered man, easy of approach, both respected and beloved by his fellow townspeople, he gave close consideration to whatever might affect the community. Tight consolidation of the United States Rubber Company had to await the coming of new financial controls in 1929.

Every decade brought expansion of physical plant, improvements in methods, and new articles of manufacture. Four new buildings for the shoe company and nine for the glove company were erected between 1893 and 1921 until the rubber shops had crept out over all the southern part



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of the town's center. Along the west bank of the river stretching southward for a half mile rose tiers of old tires and other junked rubber dumped in the yards of the regenerating plant. Rubber workers' houses and tenements lined Rubber Avenue and the hillsides sloping down to Long Meadow brook. The most casual visitor could scarcely fail to detect the dominance of rubber. In 1920 the company acquired a paper box factory east of the river to make complete its local line. Within the factory buildings new machines gradually replaced some of the old benches where men had worked by hand. First, in 1894, came Wellman sole cutting machines, and some years later six-roll outside calendars. Introduction of metal lasts and then pressure heaters for vulcanizing made even more important changes in production processes. In 1915 the shoe company brought in its first research chemist and set up a laboratory to provide more specialized formulae than could come out of the superintendent's secret book of years gone by. So scientific manufacture entered also into the shoe shops. During the war the shops made gas masks for the Government, but of more permanent benefit to the company was a new line of footwear, Keds. This trademarked, specially sturdy, rubber-soled shoe for children eventually practically ran out of the market the older type of sneakers, but, unfortunately for Naugatuck, manufacture of Keds was centered in Bristol, Rhode Island, after 1921 and so profited the local plant little.

While shortage of workers in the shops did not reach so acute a stage as it was to attain in the second World War, still the lack of manpower in 1917-18 was pronounced. Appeals to women who had married and withdrawn from jobs with the rubber company began to appear in the *Daily News* and anyone who could recruit a new worker was offered a bonus. Then, to stabilize its working force, the company resorted to two other measures, one ultimately disastrous, the other of enduring benefit to Naugatuck. Believing that a financial interest in the company would hold valuable per-

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sonnel, the directors made available a block of stock which salaried employees could purchase below market prices, if need be by borrowing from the company. Other big corporations at this time were trying out similar plans of employee participation, and the universal enthusiasm for stock ownership, already riding high in America, made such seemingly easy roads to wealth immensely popular. The opportunity was seized upon by a good many Naugatuck people. But later when in the post-war depression the market value of the stock dropped precipitously and dividends shrank, purchasers who had borrowed from the company to finance their transactions found themselves saddled with a debt greater than the partly paid for stock was worth. The whole scheme of employee-stock-ownership was halted and never resumed. Some years later the company cancelled the outstanding notes and wiped out the balance of the borrowers' liability.

The second move, on the other hand, the inauguration of a pension plan for company employees, was immediately helpful and grew in value to the community as time went on. Over fifteen years before the Social Security Act became public law the United States Rubber Company was paying out monthly to its over-age retired employees sums large enough to permit them to live out their lives in some comfort. No contribution was required of the employee; it was a free gift. Generous as such an arrangement seems today, in 1917 it was an almost unheard-of liberality. Men and women who would otherwise have had to end their days at the Poor Farm became welcome paying guests in relatives' homes and so maintained a treasured dignity and self respect. The money saved the borough can scarcely be estimated.

Along with the company's expanded operations and new pension system, however, came changes less welcome to employees. They came about so slowly that it is difficult to tell when the older order had ceased to exist and a new taken its place. Yet it was plain by 1919 that human relations within the rubber shops were different from what



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they had been a generation before. How much may be attributed to the absorption of the local companies into a country-wide combine may be a question. As long as the superintendents who had been in charge in the days of local independence continued to direct the shops here employees were apparently not sharply aware of any differences in regime. While labor relations were not always wholly serene, such controversies as occurred were like a family quarrel and were quickly forgotten. Yet by modern standards conditions of work here, like those in other American factories, were not easy. Sixty-six hours a week at about \$1.75 a day was the rule for many men down to 1907, and after that date the closing of the shops at 4 o'clock on Saturday afternoons in summer was regarded as a special privilege. Only lack of rigorous enforcement of these long hours, together with absence of high pressure when on the job, made it endurable. Not until 1912 was a Saturday half-holiday established. Still shoe shop employees down to the retirement of Frederick F. Schaffer as General Manager could feel that they were dealing with local men who understood their temper and local conditions.

But gradually the situation changed. To the labor force of native Yankees were added during the early years of the twentieth century a number of Russians, Lithuanians, and Poles who neither spoke nor understood any English, and who, therefore, were not regarded quite as fellow citizens. Pressure from non-resident officers of the United States Rubber Company began to mount to bring the Naugatuck shops into line with general policies of the corporation, and home rule began to wane. The old casual methods of production no longer sufficed to meet competition in the rubber industry. In years gone by boot-makers had been to an extraordinary degree a law unto themselves. As long as each man made his "ticket," a specified number of shoes a day, no one required him to keep any special hours. He could take an afternoon out to go to a ball game and return in the

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evening to complete his ticket. Shop discipline, as we know it today, did not exist. The regime was pleasant but highly inefficient. In a fully mechanized industry it could not have endured at all. Greater efficiency, therefore, became imperative as soon as keen competition for markets developed. By 1917 the lush, easy-going days, enjoyed in rubber shoe-making since the beginning of the century, were at an end. Scarcely realizing what had been happening, local shoe shop employees found themselves no longer workers in self-sufficient Naugatuck factories but infinitesimal cogs in a great industrial machine.

The first incident that indicated this shift was not in itself important. Substitution of so-called "making teams" for the earlier scheme, whereby every worker completed a series of operations to make a pair of shoes, was essentially only a logical development of the principle of subdivision of labor. In 1917 in order to speed up production and lower costs, management instituted teams of workers, two or four, and later six people, each one of whom performed only one operation. Piece-rates now were based on the teams' daily output, not the individuals', and any bonus for exceeding a day's quota was paid to the team to be divided among them. This system, unquestionably more efficient, had, however, the usual effect of destroying the individual craftsman's sense of pride in his work. No one man could now earn a name for turning out more shoes or better shoes than his neighbor at the next bench. The new system, the necessary preliminary of assembly line production to be introduced some twelve years later, occasioned no particular friction at the time. War-time wages were high and workers were in demand. The change was only a straw in the wind.

But two years later, in the summer of 1919, trouble cropped up over wage-rates in the tennis and stitching departments of the recently consolidated Footwear Division of the company. The postwar high cost of living, familiar to us also in the 1940's, brought about the first demand



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for increased rates. Early in July about 150 men, followed the next week by some 100 women in the tennis department, walked out on strike over the company's refusal to raise wages. It was not a particularly ominous gesture, as the whole plant was to be shut down for two weeks at the end of July for the annual "vacation," vacation, needless to say, without pay save for salaried personnel. Everyone assumed that the difficulty would be smoothed out before the shops reopened in August. Comment in the local press was confined to the back pages of the paper, as befitted a trivial episode. But in the interim the striking "tennis makers" strengthened their position. An organizer from the International Boot and Shoe Workers' Union had arrived on the scene and before the end of July reported that 860 people in Naugatuck had applied for membership in the new local. Within two days of the reopening of the mills in August this number had increased to 2,500, and the chairman of the recently elected strike committee announced that unless the company agreed to a 20 per cent general wage increase and an equitable readjustment of particular piece tariffs, the union would call a general strike. Management, proclaiming its generosity in having already reduced the working week to forty-eight hours without corresponding wage cuts, refused to be moved. The response was prompt; at a mass-meeting held in Linden Park on the night of August 12 the rubber workers by an overwhelming vote declared in favor of a walk-out. Twenty-eight hundred employees, 75 per cent of all Naugatuck's workers, went on strike. As the first and only prolonged strike the borough ever experienced, it is worth examination.

The weeks that followed were anxious ones for everyone interested in Naugatuck's welfare. The strike soon spread to the regenerating plant. Picket lines were formed around each of the company buildings, and union members announced at intervals that they would never return until the company gave in. Encouraged by A. F. of L. officials from

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Boston, Providence, and Hartford, the local's demands were increased; a 25 to 35 per cent general pay raise, a 40¢ an hour minimum wage, an eight-hour day, and time-and-a-half for overtime. The men from the regenerating plant, where operations ran round the clock, asked for a three-shift instead of the existing two-shift schedule. Management's protests that wages were not out of line the strikers countered with figures of their own. At the foundry, they declared, men were receiving 50¢ an hour, whereas 30¢ was the usual rate for rubber workers. The Bristol Company had recently raised wages 34 per cent. The bootmakers ignored the fact that the work was not comparable either in the skill or brawn required. In other plants of the United States Rubber Company, they asserted, wages were higher than in Naugatuck, where to keep body and soul together every member of a family must work.

At the beginning of the strike Charles T. McCarthy, the factory manager, had been ill, and in his absence representatives of management had adopted an undiplomatic attitude of aloofness. Toward the end of August McCarthy returned, took steps to declare the company's readiness to discuss wage problems, but only with committees of its own employees, the implication being of course that the strike was the work of outside trouble-makers. The strikers repudiated the suggestion that their committee was not composed exclusively from their own ranks and rejected flatly the company's proposal to return to work first and argue pay rates later. Speeches at union mass meetings had always to be translated into Russian, Polish, and Lithuanian for the sake of the non-English speaking members.

The weeks dragged on. Merchants extending credit became more and more uneasy. Men congratulated themselves rather mournfully only upon the absence of violence and rowdyism. Benefit ball games and other entertainments helped finance the strikers, but by September many a family was feeling the pinch. In spite of the bravely voiced defiance



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of union officers, the unanimity of the workers began to evaporate. Every day a few more slid in through the mill gates to return to work, until by mid-September it was obvious that the union could not hold out much longer. At this point the company renewed its offer to take back everyone, meet with shop committees to discuss wages, and—lone triumph for the union—submit to arbitration any issue not settled satisfactorily between shop committees and management. Representatives of the International attempted to cheer the local people by insisting that they had made notable progress, for not only had they won the promise of arbitration from the company but they now had a strong union ready to wield the cudgels in any future controversy.

So Naugatuck's most extended strike ended. Wages were raised somewhat, though they were again reduced in the depression of 1921. The vaunted strength of the Boot and Shoe Workers' local proved ephemeral. The union disappeared, and no second attempt at unionization occurred for many years. But there was one definite advantage gained. Company officials, unwilling again to risk interference from outside labor organizers, inaugurated a Factory Council made up of one representative from each department in the shops. In weekly meetings these representatives discussed grievances, recommended action to company officials, and received decisions of management in response to employee requests. For over a decade the Council served the invaluable purpose of adjusting to mutual satisfaction the interests of employees and employers. Still the strike left its mark. In spite of the pension plan, work for the rubber company ceased to be coveted as it had been a generation earlier. Boot-makers discovered that they were simply industrial employees holding factory jobs of no particular distinctive importance. They were no longer a special caste.

Meanwhile other forms of rubber manufacture had found a place here. First of these was rubber reclamation. The feasibility of reclaiming rubber for re-use was well known

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before the nineties; a reclaiming plant had been opened in Philadelphia in the eighties. But not until the price of natural rubber began to mount sharply and the amount of used rubber to be salvaged had increased in quantity did anyone in Naugatuck give close attention to the scheme. It was in November 1892 that a few men connected with the shoe company undertook to open a reclaiming plant on Rubber Avenue. When fire wiped out this building, known in those days as the "Shoddy Shop," operations were moved to a building on the west bank of the river south of the Ward shop. In the winter of 1898 this plant also burned, causing a loss of half a million dollars. The company officials thereupon announced that they intended to move elsewhere in order to escape Naugatuck's heavy taxation. But freemen of the borough were by then so convinced of the importance of the factory to the community that they agreed to reduce taxes upon the property for five years, provided the plant be rebuilt here. So Naugatuck continued to be a center of rubber reclamation.

At first old rubber shoes supplied most of the material, but in the course of a few years tires, accumulating rapidly with the wider use of automobiles, were the main source. For twenty years reclamation was carried on exclusively by the sulphuric acid process, but after 1912 by the newer alkaline method as well. The slabs of regenerated rubber shipped to the shoe or glove shop for combination with natural rubber or marketed as reclaimed rubber to manufacturers elsewhere soon proved essential. By 1900 industry had discovered that combination of reclaimed with natural rubber improved most products, as loss in elasticity was more than offset by gain in strength. Thereafter 90 per cent of the rubber goods made in this country contained some regenerated rubber. The enormous growth of the reclamation plant in Naugatuck naturally followed, and in 1913 the United States Rubber Company absorbed the enterprise. Indeed, inasmuch as the stockholders of the reclamation company were



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identical with some of the owners of the United States Rubber, the transfer was a paper transaction only.

Work in the regenerating plant was in general well paid. In the first place it was heavy, much of it required some judgment on the part of the operator, and all of it was unavoidably disagreeable. The fumes of the acid and the hot rubber and the debilitating heat were sometimes nearly overpowering. The participation of some of the men from the reclaiming unit in the 1919 strike was born both of sympathy with the boot-makers and of determination to have three eight-hour shifts replace the existing eleven- and thirteen-hour ones. Three shifts were not established, however, until 1930.

Meanwhile, as a consequence of the expansion of rubber reclaiming, the demand for sulphuric acid also grew. Sulphuric acid became more difficult to obtain in quantity and higher and higher priced. Accordingly in 1904 a group of men interested in rubber manufacture started in Naugatuck a plant for making this essential chemical. Adjacent to the regenerating plant they erected the first building of the Naugatuck Chemical Company and began manufacture of heavy acids. In 1910 the United States Rubber Company took it over as an integral part of the great corporation. By then the plant was having a struggle to beat off the killing competition of the larger chemical companies. In spite of large purchases from the local rubber shops and the brass foundries in Waterbury, the output of sulphuric acid was proving greater than demand. Greater diversification was clearly necessary if the chemical company was to survive. So research chemists undertook a new program to find additional products needed either by the rubber industry or others. In time they were to give America a long list of chemicals, varnishes, aromatics, and a series of compounds that revolutionized rubber manufacture.

The first very important contribution of the Naugatuck chemists, however, arose from the dilemma created by the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914. American scientists had

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already discovered that adding aniline to rubber reduced the amount of time needed for vulcanization, that, in short, aniline was an accelerator. But Germany at that time was the only producer of aniline, an intermediate for coal-tar dyes, and by 1915 the British blockade had completely cut off the German supply from users in this country. There was no aniline available in the whole United States. Determined to overcome this obstacle, a group of young chemists in Naugatuck, guiding themselves by a German text book, undertook to produce aniline here. On one of the hottest July days ever recorded in Naugatuck, they finished a first batch, run off without redistillation into a drum which was at once shipped to tire-makers in Detroit. The American process was soon greatly improved, but from that day onward American manufacturers were freed from dependence on the German dye-trust.

For Naugatuck as a community the chemical company came to be of greater importance than anyone could have anticipated when the plant opened in 1904. As its operations broadened it gave employment to a larger and larger number of people. But its chief significance lay in the prestige it brought to the town. In considerable measure because of the chemical company, by 1921 Naugatuck was no longer an ordinary New England manufacturing city but rather on a small scale a center of scientific industrial research. Though population did not grow markedly, the coming to Naugatuck of a steady stream of young men interested in chemical research created an atmosphere different from that of the usual mill town. Future developments were to stress this difference.

In spite of the added activity that the rubber reclamation and the chemical plants brought to Naugatuck, in the first decade of the twentieth century the drawbacks of being a rubber town remained. For there was no change in the rubber shops' system of seasonal employment. As the number of employees increased, in busy seasons the problem of lay-



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offs in winter grew proportionately. Public-spirited citizens became more and more concerned. Diversification of industry in the community appeared to be the only answer. In 1909 men at the foundry financed a new company to make ball-bearing shade rollers, and during the fourteen years of its existence in Naugatuck the company provided steady employment to about twenty-five men. But that was not enough. The Board of Trade therefore in 1910 began a new campaign to induce other manufacturers to locate here. At this juncture the city planners learned that the assets of the Risdon Tool Works of Waterbury could be bought and the plant moved to Naugatuck; so one hundred Naugatuck residents raised \$10,000 and made the purchase. In the spring of 1913 the company moved into a new building erected on land given by George Andrew where, with fifteen employees and twenty-five machines, operations began.

To avoid the uncertainties inherent in the making of tools for other manufacturers, the company now decided to give itself over to manufacture of metal components. But it had no line and no customers. Troubles mounted, partial financial reorganization ensued, and prospects were not rosy. In these straits company engineers conceived the idea of making by a simplified process the metal clasps for Paris garters. From the day that Lewis A. Dibble, then manager and later president of the company, secured that order, the Risdon enterprise gained momentum. Paris garters saved the company. World War I brought a great increase of business in component parts for other industries, for naval vessels, and for ordnance. An automatic multiple plunger press, installed in 1916, turned out millions of cartridge clips at a big saving over former methods of manufacture. Accurate and efficient tools and equipment also enabled the company to make Colt Automatic .45 caliber pistol magazines in quantity. Plant facilities, increased by new wings to the original factory and by a second building in 1918, were improved year by year with additions of new automatic

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machines. Designers and engineers planned and supervised the construction of the tools, dies, and fixtures that produced components within .00025 inch tolerances. After the war, profiting from the lessons learned in fabrication of sheet metal into a great variety of items previously produced only from forgings or bar steel, the Risdon Manufacturing Company built up a steady market for articles varying from safety-pins to fuse sockets.

It is worthy of comment that for all its modernity of production methods, the company for twenty years, as late as 1933, resorted to one device usually associated with a much earlier day in industry. Stringing the safety-pins onto wires was farmed out to women in the neighborhood to do at home, much as the makers of Yankee notions nearly a hundred years before had let out buttons and hooks and eyes to be fastened to cards by women and children working at home in the evenings. All through the 1920's passers-by were familiar with the sight of small boys homeward-bound, drawing through the streets toy express wagons full of loose safety-pins. About 1932, however, teachers and other citizens protested this system, because children, set to industrial homework at night by their parents, came to school too tired to study the next day. The company thereupon installed machines to do the job.

Company policy, always carefully adhered to, limited orders to established items needed in volume, and the result was steady employment for the skilled workmen. Thus the primary purpose of the citizens who brought the enterprise into Naugatuck was fulfilled. Layoffs were infrequent and brief. Turnover was nil. Unemployment that might have resulted from increasing mechanization was offset by corresponding expansion of operations. Furthermore, the degree of skill required of considerable part of the working force grew rather than diminished with the constant introduction of new automatic machines. Intelligence was necessary to keep the machine tools in perfect running order, and in-



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spection demanded vigilant attention and care. So most employees at the Risdon plant were highly paid. And in addition to good pay, tool- and diemakers and technicians of all kinds could look forward at once to interesting assignments and to possible promotions. For investors of capital the venture was equally satisfactory; after 1916 the company never failed to declare regular dividends.

Measured in terms of distinction of product, scarcely less noteworthy was the Naugatuck Manufacturing Company. The process by which the seamless copper floats, the company's mainstay, were manufactured was the fruit of the labors of Erastus W. Whitlock, long general manager for the company. The secret lay in using galvanic action to coat with copper two hand-spun copper shells which had been soldered into a sphere. Ball floats for open tanks or nickel-plated for use under high steam pressure, all must be fabricated with the most exacting care to guarantee durability. The company never employed more than a handful of men, but their skill turned out floats of a flawlessness that made the line famous without other advertising. Within the organization there existed the kind of intimacy possible only in a very small plant.

A somewhat similar situation obtained in the John M. Russell Manufacturing Company, makers of sash and plumb-ers' chains. In 1907 John Russell had moved into the old factory in Millville previously used by the Naugatuck Manufacturing Company. For some fifteen years before this time the old shops in Millville had been occupied off and on by a series of small manufacturing businesses. Joel Webster's shear shop of the nineties was followed by a cut glass factory run by his son, while nearby in other old buildings a variety of enterprises appeared and disappeared. But the Russell venture was more permanent. Using an ancient overshot waterwheel for part of the mill power, the family built up a solid business, expanding gradually as their reputation for quality wares grew. With improved facilities the company

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in time added new items of manufacture, notably buckles for arctics and other special fasteners. Like the Naugatuck Manufacturing Company, the Russells before World War II never had more than twenty employees. But concerns like these preserved for the borough in the twentieth century many of the pleasanter aspects of the small shops of the preceding era.

The Dunham Hosiery Company, successor to Thomas Lewis' satinet mill, in a somewhat different way also served as a link between Naugatuck's manufacturing in the nineteenth century and in the twentieth. The woolen mill had the longest history of any factory in town, and, with little alteration in mill layout, down through World War I card and knitting machines clattered away within the plant much as they had a generation before. But notwithstanding its employment of nearly 300 people, the company controlled from Hartford was less vital to Naugatuck than other enterprises. Wages were relatively low, set by the current rate in other New England textile mills, and curtailment of operations after 1919 occasioned some dismay but little surprise.

To keep pace with the industrial growth of these years, utility companies in Naugatuck had also to expand. Telephone lines were extended and the Naugatuck Electric Lighting Company improved its facilities in order to supply streets, factories, stores, and homes with electricity. Whereas kerosene lamps had been common in 1893, nearly thirty years later these had all but disappeared. This change at once reduced fire hazards and added greatly to householders' convenience and comfort. Even more essential to the borough's welfare was the enlargement of the water works. The Naugatuck Water Company, an incorporated group of local citizens who had refused to be balked in 1887 by the town's rejection of responsibility for a public water system, had had many difficulties in financing the undertaking. But under the auspices of Eli C. Barnum, General Manager from 1889 to 1918, the company gradually strengthened its



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position and before 1915 was able to add six new reservoirs to the original 7,000,000 gallon storage pond in Straitsville. The company paid its stockholders dividends regularly from 1893 onward, but the beneficiaries of the company's services included practically every family in Naugatuck as well as some in Beacon Falls and the Platts Mills section of Waterbury. Water piped into houses meant the installation of bathtubs and inside toilets, not only a convenience but, with the elimination of out-door privies, a safeguard to public health. Chlorination of the water in the reservoirs prevented contamination.

In general, apart from the special features of its manufacturing program, business life in Naugatuck ran true to the form established in similar small industrial cities. The building contractors flourished; each new mill, every new store or office building, every new home gave them opportunities. Since practically every house erected was frame, lumber dealers also prospered. Local loyalty to familiar firms gave a specially large clientele to the Naugatuck Lumber Company, incorporated in 1899 but an outgrowth of the old enterprise started by Hial Stevens before the Civil War. Adjacent to its own mill-work shop the company ran a cider mill every fall for some years, thereby contriving incidentally to remind customers of ties with the past. Most Naugatuck contractors confined themselves to Naugatuck itself, but occasionally a well-established firm secured contracts in other places. After World War I, W. J. Megin, in particular, began to extend his operations and in time was to win a reputation for fine work all up and down the valley. The general introduction of central heating and inside plumbing into houses, and installation of electric wiring for lighting also opened up new business for suppliers of household equipment and utilities.

Retailers, however, as formerly, were handicapped by the proximity of Waterbury, and in fact the opening of the Naugatuck-Waterbury street railway in 1895 made shopping

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trips to the bigger city so easy that Naugatuck merchants were more restricted than ever. Until his retirement John M. Page succeeded in maintaining a line of some distinction to his store selling household goods. But this was unusual, and in most local stores the variety and quality of merchandise was limited. People with money spent it elsewhere, partly because growing wealth brought automobiles which, while still not priced within the reach of many factory workers, were already making marked inroads on the comparative geographical isolation of the Naugatuck of 1890. Horse-drawn drays and delivery wagons in 1921 were no longer the rule but the exception, and the harness-maker, the blacksmith, the feed-dealer, and the livery stableman were largely transformed into the garage mechanic and gasoline dealer. Extension of telephone lines also brought Naugatuck into closer communication with the world beyond its limits.

While Naugatuck was now too closely tied into the business structure of the whole region to aspire to becoming either a commercial or a financial center, the local banks held their own. The Savings Bank was of decided benefit to a small army of depositors, many of them humble people who placed all their savings here. By 1911 it had outgrown its headquarters in the Town Hall and put up its own building on North Church Street. The simple dignified lines of its architecture suggested the unostentatious solidity of the institution itself. The Naugatuck National Bank had erected its own building as early as 1893. Like the Savings Bank it grew steadily and had a substantial surplus by 1921.

Nearly twenty-five years of rising prices and industrial expansion before 1921 thus brought some changes peculiar to this particular manufacturing city and others that were characteristic of American industrial communities in general. One practically universal change is worth especially noting: the greater impersonality in manufacturing concerns. People talked in terms of company policies, company earnings, company expansion, rather than individuals' activi-



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ties and achievements. The corporations largely superseded in men's thinking the living persons who made up the companies. In 1890 employees knew their employers as persons with whom they might exchange a few friendly words in the course of any ordinary day's work; in 1921 employees sometimes scarcely knew company officers by sight.

On the other hand, in one respect Naugatuck departed widely from the course set in most New England mill towns: in Naugatuck labor unions played virtually no part. A carpenters' union, organized in 1891, twenty-five years later a plumbers' local, and in 1917 a painters' and decorators' union represented the building trades. At the foundry a molders' union appeared early in the century, fought one or two successful skirmishes with company officers, and then subsided into little more than a social club that conducted annual picnics and balls. The attempt to unionize the rubber shops in 1919 ended in nothing permanent.

Of the three factors accounting for this divergence from the norm, first is the fact that in 1920 the borough still numbered less than 15,000 inhabitants, so that no class of people was wholly cut off from contact with any other. Despite the increased impersonality of the corporations, employers lived too close to their employees to be able to shut their eyes to any situation that created misery for workers' families. The effects of this proximity, since Naugatuck factories, with the exception of the rubber shops, were still controlled by Naugatuck money and Naugatuck men, was to make impossible a complete disregard of the well-being of the community as a whole. The primary reason for unionizing was thus missing.

In the second place, an influx of foreign workers speaking no English added an undigestible lump to Naugatuck's laboring classes. Until the Poles, Russians, and Lithuanians employed by the rubber company and others could understand the language enough to comprehend issues at stake, they were bound to be a drag upon any group aiming at labor

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organization. The presence of an interpreter at workers' meetings, as at the time of the rubber strike, proved at best hampering. Moreover, the meagre standard of living to which these East European peasants were accustomed tended to diminish any wish to protest the conditions they found here. Naugatuck wages, fairly high, may well have seemed munificent.

Finally, it seems probable that owing to the nature of Naugatuck's industries many factory workers as late as the 1920's nursed hopes of advancing into the ranks of salaried personnel or of accumulating savings to invest profitably. People on salary were not traditionally concerned with labor unions; and the owners of bonds or stocks of course immediately, even if unconsciously, themselves became petty capitalists. Increasing numbers of supervisory jobs in expanding plants promised to the conscientious and able worker recurrent chances of promotion to lift him out of the ranks of ordinary mill hands. And the growth of manufacturing based on laboratory research suggested the possibility of educating the younger generation to a point to give them opportunities unattainable by their fathers working at bench or machine. So long as the social and economic structure in Naugatuck gave signs of flexibility, labor unions had little on which to feed.



## CHAPTER XI

### *The Growth of the Corporations, 1921-1940*

THE downward swing of the business cycle in 1921 gave Naugatuck manufacturers a temporary setback such as all American industrial communities faced. But its effects were not long-enduring, and after brief retrenchment companies here resumed full-scale operations. Only the Dunham Hosiery Company failed to survive the twenties. In common with many New England textile concerns, that enterprise was slowly pushed out by southern competition, and after limping along for several years the company passed out of existence in 1927. Concern for the employees stranded by this collapse induced Harris Whittemore, Jr., to purchase the property and organize the Naugatuck Mills under the management of the superintendent of the late Dunham Company. Fabrication of cotton net for rubber linings kept the new company functioning down into 1934 when the general debacle of business brought it also to an end.

Otherwise manufacturing in Naugatuck boomed all through the twenties. The foundry added a new building; the Risdon company expanded; the chemical and the rubber regenerating plants developed new products. The Chamber of Commerce, established in the fall of 1921 to take in hand a planned scheme of community development, soon found its task easier than anticipated when it organized in the day of the post-war recession. Members of the Chamber of Commerce, freed from anxiety about employment in Naugatuck, were able to expend their energies upon promoting various improvements in the borough, organization of the Building and Loan Association, formation of the Recreation and Playground Association, sponsoring of flower shows for the benefit of the Day Nursery, enactment of build-

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ing ordinances, and the like. Two industrial exhibits of products made in Naugatuck excited much interest within the borough and favorable comment from outside. Tabulation of local corporations' employment figures periodically after 1925 gave information on which to appraise the borough's status and probable immediate future. One of the most valuable services the Chamber of Commerce performed in its first year was bringing to Naugatuck Peter Paul, Incorporated.

The story of Peter Paul, candy-makers now known from one end of America to the other, reads like a Horatio Alger or Nick Carter "penny-dreadful." The founder of the company was an Armenian immigrant by the name of Peter Halajian who landed in the United States in 1890. Thrift in time established him as proprietor of a small chain of candy stores in Naugatuck and Torrington, Connecticut, where he sold confectionery and ice cream of his own making. Because his customers found difficulty in pronouncing his Armenian name, he legally adopted the English equivalent, Peter Paul. Since separately owned little candy kitchens in various Connecticut towns had scant chance of ever amounting to much, in 1919 Peter Paul, in the face of some ridicule, persuaded five Armenian friends to pool their interests with his to organize a candy-manufacturing firm in New Haven. By 1922 the business had grown to such an extent that more space was needed, but New Haven bankers were not interested in backing the expansion. At this point a Naugatuck bank through the efforts of the local Chamber of Commerce agreed to make a loan, and Peter Paul moved to Naugatuck. On an open hillside on the road toward Bethany the company erected a fine-looking, well-lighted, brick factory and installed modern machinery. Within two years' time the bank loan was repaid with interest.

Through the twenties the company's business grew steadily as Peter Paul "Mounds," the company's first product and



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always its best-selling, became better known and more popular. Most of its growing list of employees were also stockholders. Death of its founder in 1927 failed to halt the company's expansion, for Peter Paul's able brother-in-law, Calvin Kazanjian, took up the reins of management. But the depression brought reverses until company officers took drastic action based on their conviction that, out of \$200,000,000 candy sales in the United States in 1932, Peter Paul could net a larger share. They discarded the tin-foil wrapping, repackaged "Mounds" in cellophane, and then set the price of a package of two at a nickel, the former price of one. Within a month sales began to rise. By 1935 when many manufacturers were just beginning to recover from the depths of their slump, Peter Paul had doubled its employment over the 1932 figure, doubled its plant capacity by a large addition to the factory, and declared a 100 per cent stock dividend. Emphasis upon good quality ingredients and a skillful use of radio advertising continued to expand the market for these cocoanut-filled, chocolate-coated candy bars. To the astonishment of old residents, Naugatuck in the minds of thousands of Americans came to mean the home of Peter Paul.

No other manufacturing concern in the borough had an equally spectacular career. But for all this gratifying success, because the candy company employed far fewer people than the United States Rubber Company, for most working people developments at the rubber shops mattered more immediately. Of particular importance to Naugatuck were the new lines of manufacture at the chemical plant.

Before 1925 the Naugatuck Chemical's primary products were sulphuric, nitric, and muriatic acids, nitrobenzol and aniline. These heavy chemicals were sold to the brass, copper, and other metal industries of New England, as well as to rubber companies. Large quantities of sulphuric acid went to the rubber regenerating plant in Naugatuck until about

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1925 when the sulphuric process was dropped altogether in favor of the cheaper and more efficient soda process. Then came the discovery of V G B.

For years chemists had been searching for a compound that would retard oxidization of rubber. They reasoned that since science had found chemicals that accelerated the processes of vulcanization, it must be possible to find others that would retard chemical action, particularly the action of oxygen which made rubber brittle. In 1923 Dr. Sidney Cadwell, working in the company's General Laboratories in New Jersey, hit upon the formula of V G B, the first reliable antioxidant known. Commercial production of this revolutionizing compound began in the Naugatuck Chemical plant as soon as Cadwell had secured his patent. Today 90 per cent of the rubber consumed contains antioxidant in the finished product; it is essential in all rubber goods where service requirements are severe.

While manufacture of V G B immediately expanded operations at the Naugatuck Chemical, still more significant were the results six years later of the discovery of a new antioxidant. Flex-cracking, the breaking that developed in rubber products subjected to repeated flexing or bending, was the chief cause of tire failures. Consequently the discovery of a compound that imparted to rubber a great resistance to flex-cracking was of monumental importance. Almost overnight "BLE" became the most widely used antioxidant of the industry. Though the molecular construction of BLE has never been determined, its properties were recognized at once. Large-scale production both for the United States Rubber Company and for manufacturers all over the world gave the Naugatuck Chemical new importance. BLE thenceforward constituted the single most lucrative item made here.

During the thirties, in addition to heavy chemicals, accelerators, and antioxidants, the company developed a number of other valuable lines in aromatics and perfumes, plas-



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tics, varnishes, and latices. Aromatics are related to the rubber industry only because the manufacture of synthetic aromatics was related chemically to the manufacture of other of the company products. From the production of synthetic deodorants and perfumes it was only a step to compound perfumes and perfume bases from natural substances—flowers, leaves, roots, and resins. Experiment with resinous materials in turn produced a new plastic, VICTRON. This synthetic chemical, looking like glass and feeling like celluloid, is related chemically both to rubber and to certain aromatics. Its principal use was for high-frequency radio transmitters, because it combined good electrical properties with easy machinability. Most important of all the new lines was latex, basically the milk which exudes from the bark of the rubber tree when cut. Laboratory research after 1925 revealed ways of modifying latex to adapt it to a great variety of uses not only in rubber manufacture but in other industries as well. It could be made to thicken for easy spreading or made to penetrate fibers deeply, to be stable enough to resist mechanical manipulation, or quickly sensitive to coagulation. Within ten years it was wanted by the thousands of tons by makers of paper boxes, automobiles, upholstery and textiles.

Rapid growth in demand for these diversified products steadily expanded employment at the chemical plant. In 1929 the Rubber Regenerating Company and the Naugatuck Chemical Company were combined into a single unit. The following year the long-desired eight-hour shifts of work replaced the eleven- and thirteen-hour shifts at both plants, a change which automatically added to the payroll. In spite of the business depression, between 1930 and 1935 employment increased by 50 per cent. By 1940 there were nearly a thousand employees, including production workers, research chemists, laboratory assistants, and the chemical engineers responsible for design of special machines and layout of equipment. Almost three hundred scientists and techni-

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cians lent the staff distinction and brought intellectual stimulation to the whole community. Available to employees was a fine company library, one of the best industrial libraries in America, equipped with scientific books, periodicals, and copies of about 30,000 patents.

The story of the Footwear Division before 1929 was less reassuring. A new colorful line of rubber bathing shoes was started in 1923 which offset in part the transfer of the manufacture of Keds from the Naugatuck plant. Enlargement of one of the old glove shops in 1922 brought about more extended operations, and improvements in equipment promised greater efficiency. Installation of self-cutting upper calendars, rag calendars, and a hook-up with a machine for cementing together parts of the shoe was followed by introduction of the ammonia cure which sped up vulcanization and gave at once a better finish and longer life to the shoe. The Factory Council functioned effectively to keep labor relations serene. Nevertheless, the United States Rubber Company was losing money hand over fist, and in 1928 utter collapse looked not far distant to men who knew the financial condition of the company. A greater calamity for Naugatuck could scarcely be imagined.

Fortunately in 1928 the DuPont Company became financially interested in the United States Rubber Company. It was the signal for a revolution within the organization. To salvage the enterprise sweeping measures were essential. The first of these was decision to concentrate all the company's footwear manufacture in one plant instead of having it scattered among seven in New England and Pennsylvania. Because of its favorable geographical location and the adequacy of the floor space and facilities here, Naugatuck was the place chosen. Had company directors selected any other one of the possible seven localities the history of Naugatuck in the following years might have been grim indeed. As it was, the consolidation of all footwear manufacture here permitted the borough not only to survive the depression with a



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minimum of unemployment but actually to grow somewhat. A good many employees from the plants closed down between the spring of 1929 and the fall of 1932 were transferred to Naugatuck. Their coming added by so much to the general business activity of the borough. From fewer than 2,000 workers in the local shoe shops in 1928 employment rose by 1937 to almost 6,500. House building, elsewhere at a standstill, reached a peak not known since the days immediately after World War I, and some of the new arrivals had to find dwellings outside the borough.

Changes within the factory were equally far-reaching. In order to continue manufacture of all the trade-marked lines formerly made in the other company plants drastic revision of production control was necessary. The company could not afford to discard any well-selling item, but, since in rubber footwear even seemingly minor alterations of style require different handlings from the first operation onward, fabrication of some five thousand different styles of rubbers and overshoes posed a complicated problem. So management created a new department of Production Control manned by competent engineers to supervise the orderly flow of work day in and day out. In addition to the large variety of rubber-soled and canvas- or rubber-topped shoes, after 1934 the Naugatuck plant made latex bathing suits.

To produce the greater variety of articles and the much greater volume necessary for economical operation, new equipment and short-cuts in methods of manufacture were also called for. Owing to the peculiar properties of rubber, mechanization in the rubber-shoe industry was not far advanced compared to many other American industries. Though the making teams inaugurated in 1917 had sped up production somewhat, they no longer sufficed in a period when mass production was imperative if the company was to hold its own in a highly competitive market. Assembly-line production was the only answer. A first small boot conveyor was set up in 1929, then in 1930 the gum shoe making con-

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veyor, and in 1931 a series of straight line conveyors. In 1934 came the first continuous sponge presses. The effects were immediate: within four years daily production was stepped up to 100,000 pairs of shoes and in 1937 to a peak of 124,397 pairs. In 1936 after purchase of the Firestone Rubber Footwear Company another building was put up in Naugatuck to accommodate the expanding operations. The company for the first time in years got out of the red and began to make money.

But in spite of the fact that the conveyors eliminated most of the hard physical work of bootmaking, and in spite of the guarantee they supplied that the company would survive and jobs endure, bootmakers disliked the complete mechanization of what had been an honored craft. The inroads made upon their special position by the making teams were now so extended as to demote these aristocrats of labor to the role of semi-skilled factory hands. Any remaining vestige of individual workmanship was gone, and rubber shoe production became, like leather boots and shoes, a succession of repetitive assembly-line jobs, depending for volume of output upon the speed of the conveyors. Moreover, to the natural reluctance of craftsmen to seeing their special skills set aside was added some discontent arising from workmen's conviction that the conveyors served as a means of relentless periodic speed-ups. A wage-bonus payment for a group of operators who jointly could increase a day's production on their section of the line appeared to justify this view. Persuading the working force of the shops that mechanization was a condition of survival in the industry, not a ruthless exploitation of human beings, was to be a major task of the Industrial Relations department for the next fifteen years.

Workers, however, dared voice no protest over management's innovations in the early days of the depression when jobs of any kind were at a premium. While conversion of the shops was proceeding, a one-day, later a two-day a week, shut-down occurred; and in the winter of 1930-31 operations



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were further curtailed. Yet every day a line of a hundred to two hundred men and women drew up at the employment office. But the upturn was at hand for Naugatuck. The next year members on the payroll began to mount steadily. In 1933 promulgation of the N.R.A. boosted wage rates until the weekly payroll reached \$125,000. Then, after the collapse of the N.R.A., came the Wagner Act. The smoldering dissatisfactions of the bootmakers now found expression: they organized a Rubber Workers' Union under the American Federation of Labor. If the company officers were loath to see a union appear, they gave no sign.

The series of laws passed after 1935 by the federal Congress in the hey-day of the New Deal must have vouchsafed the rubber workers most of the benefits they hoped for, even had they formed no union. A pension in old age, an eight-hour day and a working week gradually reduced to forty hours, time-and-a-half for overtime, unemployment insurance—all promised the industrial worker security such as previously he could scarcely have imagined. But these safeguards notwithstanding, men in Naugatuck's rubber shops determined to stand by unionization. The AF of L charter was shortly surrendered and the Rubber Workers became a CIO affiliate. A first consent election was not held in the factories until 1940, and no formal contract with the company was signed until 1941. But from 1936 on it was plain to company officials, to company employees, and to Naugatuck in general that the United Rubber Workers' Local 45 was here to stay. It arose without disorder, it enlisted its members slowly but in growing strength, and by verbal agreements with management it entrenched itself so solidly that citizens tended to forget that an industrial workers' union had not always been a part of Naugatuck's industrial scene. Yet in spite of this obvious achievement, no other unions arose in the borough until after 1940.

Of the other old established concerns in Naugatuck the Eastern Malleable Iron Company suffered as much as any in

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the early thirties, though no industry had plain sailing. The first years of the depression the foundry survived by introducing work on aluminum castings, and thus, as one of the first companies in that field, netted some much-needed orders. But the force was reduced to 150 men in the winter of 1933, and for a time anxiety ran high in the borough lest company officers close the plant altogether in order to consolidate operations in one of the company's foundries elsewhere. This dire contingency providentially did not materialize. Naugatuck was after all the birthplace of the Eastern Malleable Iron Company, and Naugatuck directors successfully opposed suggestions to shut down the plant which for seventy years had been a significant factor in Naugatuck's industrial life. Gradually business revived. Between 1935 and 1940 average employment stood at nearly five hundred, while manufacture was made more efficient by use of powdered coal and, after 1939, installation of electrical annealing furnaces which cut annealing time from nine days to five.

Although employment in the smaller factories dropped less sharply than at the foundry, the Naugatuck Manufacturing and the Russell companies together had fewer than thirty employees in the winter of 1933, about a 25 per cent decrease from the average of the 1920's, while the Bristol Company and the Risdon cut their working forces about 35 per cent between 1930 and 1933. Yet Naugatuck in the blackest days of the depression was called "the best town in the valley." After 1933 there was a general upswing. At the Platts Mills shops continuing research developed some new items of manufacture. The Risdon Company used the months of slackened operation to improve its production processes.

In 1933 the Risdon Company installed "shadowgraph" machines equipped with powerful lenses that made possible visual check of dimensions of components to closer tolerance than ever before. Design of new jigs and fixtures capable of performing a continuous series of intricate operations on the great automatic presses multiplied the number and variety



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of articles the shop could fabricate from sheet metal. Metallurgical developments of tool steels produced more durable dies. Whereas twenty years earlier a die had lasted for only a few hundred or thousand stampings, now a million pieces per die became standard performance. So by constant attention to detail the company built up its reputation for precision manufacture, was able to lower its prices, and after 1933 gradually expanded its payroll from about two hundred people to nearly double that number by 1940. Aware of the benefit of having specialized personnel, in 1938 the company inaugurated a two year training course in which each year three or four young men were schooled in engineering problems of the type the company regularly encountered. Periodic reports and studied recommendations from the student apprentices gave the shops some workable improvements in techniques and, more important, developed a corps of men educated for exacting supervisory jobs.

Meanwhile three new enterprises had started up in the borough all of which eventually contributed a good deal to Naugatuck's industrial stability. The first of these originated by Harris Whittemore, Jr., in 1925, began in part of the hosiery plant as a small jobbing shop to do machine work for concerns like the Eastern Malleable Iron Company. This soon proved unprofitable and in 1928 the Naugatuck Engineering and Machinery Company, with more company directors than employees, sold its equipment but, keeping its incorporation papers, branched out into experimental work on aircraft engines. Contacts with Pratt & Whitney opened the way. The aircraft company was working on powerful new engines in which increased compression built up excessive temperatures. Accurate temperature indicators and redesigned thermal controls were therefore essential. To these problems the Naugatuck company turned its attention, and with help from one of the Bristol Company engineers began manufacture of aircraft thermal controls. Taking the name of the Lewis Engineering Company in 1933, the corporation

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carried on, constantly revising its product as trial and error rendered one feature after another obsolete. To five men in the shop in 1933 thirty odd were added in the course of the next six years, and the enterprise was still just getting under way. The outbreak of war in Europe gave the impetus to immediate acceleration and by 1940 the Lewis Engineering Company was expanding into a position of major importance in the borough.

The second new industry started in 1927 when the Naugatuck Glass Company began the fabricating of sheet glass for various purposes. Winfield Scott Witherwax, founder of the company, in 1916 had been a foreman for the Waterbury Clock Company. When American manufacturers were cut off by the war from supplies of European watch crystals the Waterbury company had been obliged to manufacture its own. So Witherwax, assisting with the development of the crystal making, had early first-hand experience. After the war imported crystals again poured into America and the Waterbury company reverted to purchasing instead of making its own. But Witherwax, who meanwhile had served a year and one-half in the army, was eager to pursue the interesting possibilities recognized during the brief but intensive period of war-time effort. He spent the next several years making crystals with other associates in Waterbury. In 1927 he arranged for the purchase of a much used and dilapidated silvering table, a small machine for cutting circles and a flat disc for hand beveling small square and rectangular pieces, rented a tiny building from the Megin Construction Company on Elm Street and started operations with three employees.

Hard times struck before the Naugatuck shop was well established, but the enterprise survived and gradually strengthened. After outgrowing the space available in the first location the company purchased the land and building originally erected by the foundry as an employee recreation center, and here operations continued to expand. During the twenty years of its existence the Naugatuck Glass Company



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acquired a reputation for quality and service that resulted in an ever-increasing volume of business. Ten years after its start in Naugatuck there were 110 employees, twenty years after, 300. New and greatly improved equipment of various kinds were added until there had been eight expansions of floor-space since the modest beginning, and the company was supplying component glass parts to many of the country's leading manufacturers. In the post-war period the glass company was to rank among the borough's most promising industries.

The third new venture was the Butterfield Company, manufacturers of bakelite products. T. F. Butterfield, head of the concern, had withdrawn from a firm in Watertown in order to start his own company. Naugatuck was conveniently near, and space in the old woolen mill was available. In 1933 in the darkest days of the depression when Butterfield began operations here, plastics for industrial use were relatively new and finding customers was not easy. The molded plastic insulating fixtures the company made were principally for the electrical industry. But the primary requisite for success in this field of manufacture, expert knowledge of the engineering techniques of molding phenolic and thermo-setting plastics, Butterfield possessed from long experience. Starting with one accumulator system and six molding presses, the company built up its business gradually until by 1940 it was running three accumulator systems, forty molding presses, and four injection machines. Butterfield purchased the basic material so that detailed knowledge of chemistry was not necessary. Jobs were not highly skilled, but work was steady and as the company grew the payroll increased.

The acute business recession of the thirties notwithstanding, overall employment in Naugatuck factories more than doubled between 1930 and 1940. Yet population of the borough increased only 15 per cent, from 14,315 to 15,388. The explanation of this seeming paradox lies partly in the increased employment of women and young girls at work

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which formerly was men's. Greater mechanization of processes, elimination of much of the hard physical labor, and substitution of automatic machine controls on operations once demanding individual skill and judgment brought women into every plant. Their inexperience was no handicap but permitted employers to hire them at wages men could not accept. Family income was greater because in most working families more than one member was now a wage-earner. The other factor that contributed to the situation of many more working people without corresponding growth in the number of families in Naugatuck was the increase in commuting. Privately owned automobiles and good bus service made it easy to work in Naugatuck but live elsewhere.

House building, nevertheless, was more active in the borough than was general in most American towns after 1926. In 1922 the Chamber of Commerce sponsored a Building and Loan Association through which a good many people financed building their own homes. The less than 2,000 dwellings of the borough in 1920 had grown to 2,315 by 1930. In the next decade when in most communities building was completely paralyzed by the depression, Naugatuck people built 437 more, bringing the total up over 2,750. A number of these new houses were for the employees of the rubber company transferred from the footwear plants in other cities. Yet in spite of this 40 per cent increase in twenty years' time, World War II was still to find the borough short of housing.

Factory building, on the other hand, did not proceed on as big a scale as the acceleration in the borough's industrial life would presuppose. Peter Paul's original plant and its subsequent addition, an extension of one of the rubber shops in 1922 and one new building for the shoe company in 1936, a new furnace for the foundry, and enlargements of the Risdon plant constituted practically the whole industrial building program for twenty years. Compared to building in



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the preceding decades it was meagre. Most construction work after 1921 was remodeling of existing structures. Renovations from time to time were necessary, and particularly sweeping changes when an old building was put to new use. So some changes in layout occurred when the Lewis Engineering and the Butterfield companies moved into the old woolen mill, and extensive remodeling of the rubber shops when the rubber company moved most units of its footwear division to Naugatuck. Maintenance of factory buildings also became a large business for some contractors.

Foremost of the concerns engaged in factory maintenance after 1931 was the W. J. Megin Company. Megin in the years following World War I had broadened the scope of his business by giving close attention to promptness and courtesy of service combined with scrupulous observance of every detail of a contract. Incorporated in 1926, the company built several fine houses in the valley, but in the next decade found its principal work in maintenance contracts for industrial concerns. Maintenance of the United States Rubber Company buildings alone kept a large force of carpenters, roofers, and masons busy. A notable result of these factory maintenance contracts was the disappearance of seasonal employment, that century-old drawback in the building trades. Carpenters and brick-layers every winter had wandered off to other towns or tided over at odd jobs in the borough, to return to building when spring renewed activity. In the winter of 1920-21 Megin himself had had only three men on his payroll. But after 1934 he succeeded in keeping some two hundred men employed the year round. Of all the builders in the vicinity only Megin had no men on WPA projects all through the depression. In fact, before 1940 dawned, thanks in large part to the vision and capacity of William J. Noble, the superintendent and later owner of the concern, the Megin Company had about three hundred men working so frequently on over-time that a year's work amounted more

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nearly to sixty weeks a year than to fifty or fifty-two. And workmen's appreciation of Megin fairness and high standards of employment became a by-word.

In keeping with industrial developments, some other business projects also naturally assumed new form. For example, the more general use of oil for heating contributed to the growth of the Naugatuck Fuel Company. The corporation, set up in 1928, bought the property and goodwill of a local coal dealer and of a gasoline supplier and launched on a highly successful career of supplying to Naugatuck coal, cokes, and liquid fuel. Equipped with its own railroad siding and with great oil storage tanks, the Naugatuck Fuel Company quickly became a useful factor in the borough's daily life. In 1931 the company took the agency for Ford motor cars, opened several neighborhood gasoline service stations, and in 1935 built on South Church Street a modern garage and office building. Local building suppliers had a harder time. The Naugatuck Lumber Company, in spite of being the oldest, most securely entrenched lumber dealer in town, and in spite of Naugatuck's extensive home-building program, suffered rather sharply during the depression because big industrial concerns like the rubber company tended to purchase lumber direct from the producers. And Naugatuck's wood lots could no longer furnish more than fire wood. Growing faith in advertising meanwhile gave both the *Daily News* and the Perry Press new opportunities. Perry's modern presses and competent staff turned out copy that held intact the patronage of local customers and frequently enlisted new outside the borough, while the daily circulation of the *News* guaranteed the local newspaper ample advertising.

Retailing continued to be affected by the proximity of the larger shops of Waterbury and New Haven. Still by giving close attention to Naugatuck's particular wants a few merchants managed to enlarge their clientele. Sweeney's Art and Stationery store founded in 1880 survived all competition, as did Culver and Melbourne, for many years the sole local



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florists. The Kennedy dry-goods store and W. F. Brennan's and C. F. Davis' grocery and meat markets carry on today the tradition of service built up over more than fifty years. Morris Freedman, who in 1893 began peddling wearing apparel and accessories from house to house, in the course of time was able to open a shop on Maple Street and later to move his enlarged business to more elaborate quarters on Church Street where his sons still carry on successfully. Somewhat similarly Joseph Carlson developed a flourishing trade by temptingly offering his teas, coffees, and other groceries to householders on their own doorsteps. He then ingeniously introduced the "premium gift" scheme of presenting purchasers of certain amounts of merchandise with a piece of furniture. Thus eventually he converted the tea and coffee shop of 1900 into the Carlson Furniture Company and still later expanded by opening a branch store in Watertown.

One lack, however, the borough felt without being able to meet, namely, a good modern hotel. The hotel on Main Street, built in 1804 to accommodate stage-coach travelers, had preserved some historic associations for old residents but one hundred twenty-five years later bore the marks of its age. Visitors to Naugatuck generally put up at Waterbury hotels or accepted the hospitality of private householders. As the influx of transients pursuing business mounted, want of more comfortable quarters than Chauncey Lewis' first tavern could offer in 1940 was a real handicap.

Local banking in the 1920's branched out considerably. Two new units were started in 1922, the Building and Loan Association and the Naugatuck Bank and Trust Company. By 1930 the former had over nine hundred share-holders, had built up assets to more than \$600,000, held the mortgages on nearly two hundred homes, and was paying dividends of 6 per cent. Weathering the depression for a mutual company was not easy, but the Association survived. The second, the Naugatuck Bank and Trust Company, was a general purpose bank used principally by local merchants during the

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1920's. It closed its doors in 1932, costing its four thousand depositors loss of about two cents on the dollar, its stockholders their investment. The two older banks faced less serious difficulties, as both were strongly entrenched in public confidence. The Naugatuck National, after 1930 located in a spacious new building, emerged at the upturn of the business cycle with assets of over \$2,000,000 and enhanced reputation for stability. And the Savings Bank, whose eagle-eyed trustees guarded its good standing as a pillar upon which rested the well-being of the whole community, could point to a record of no losses to any depositor throughout.

In the 1920's business life in Naugatuck had not been troubled, for while not all enterprises made large profits and not all working people lived in plenty, in those lush years basic economic problems appeared to be few. The American pattern prevailed: everybody expected one day to own a house and a car, take leisurely vacations, buy his wife a fur coat, send his children to college, and eventually retire on Easy Street. When the frightening reverses of 1930 and 1931 came, and the still grimmer situations in 1932 and early 1933, Naugatuck was no better prepared to meet them than any other American city. Yet actually more effectively than most the borough did find ways of lightening the gloom. The Unemployment Fund raised by individual citizens was probably the single most valuable measure, but responsible citizens were constantly on the watch for other constructive moves. In this emergency no other organization was so helpful as the Chamber of Commerce. Besides directing the campaign for raising the Unemployment Fund and supervising its spending, the executive committee bent every effort to keep people fed, business functioning, and faith in the future burning. The secretary maintained an information bureau for all comers, finding jobs in domestic service for scores of women, and keeping an informal roster of needs and opportunities in every part of town. Later, when business revival had gained momentum, this self-imposed service widened



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out to include help to people looking for places to live. In admirable fashion the Naugatuck Chamber of Commerce served as a clearing house for community wants and community planning from which stemmed many of the borough's chief improvements.

## CHAPTER XII

### *The Impact of War:*

#### *On Naugatuck's Workaday World*

THE recovery of American business in most fields of manufacture was already far advanced when war broke out in Europe in September 1939. Thanks partly to the foresight of a few government officials in high places in this country, some industrial preparations had already begun in America months before Hitler's armies invaded Poland. Machine tool-builders were already swamped with orders for the tools of production, an acceleration that in turn had affected producers of machine parts. So in Naugatuck the foundry and the Risdon Company by the summer of 1939 were again operating at capacity. In the course of the next year every factory in the borough felt the quickening effects of the war. As production schedules were stepped up, payrolls began to swell both from the increased numbers of employees and from higher wage rates. With the passage of the Selective Service Act in September 1940 and then the Lend Lease Act six months later, everyone began to realize fully that a new era was at hand; for the departure of young men drafted into military service was followed closely by larger orders for Naugatuck manufacturers. Unemployment disappeared. About 7,180 employees in Naugatuck shops in the fall of 1940 grew in a year to a peak of nearly 9,500. In the months before Pearl Harbor the standard of living rose accordingly.

While workers in metals and makers of machine parts benefited immediately from the rising tide of manufacturing activity, the developments at the chemical plant gave the Rubber Town its greatest boom. When the United States Rubber



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Company announced its plan to build a synthetic rubber plant here, the future for Naugatuck was bright indeed. It was not of course wholly a surprise. Many citizens knew that in 1939 the United States government had requested leading rubber and chemical companies to collaborate in working out formulae for manufacture of durable synthetic rubber. Though the companies asked to participate in this difficult venture in 1939 and 1940 were not cut off from supplies of natural rubber in the Far East, the possibility was well understood, and all groups unhesitatingly pooled their resources and information. For nearly twenty years United States Rubber Company research chemists had been working on problems of synthetic rubber; no organization in the country was better prepared to undertake a development and production program. "We pioneered," a company publication asserted in 1943, "in emulsion polymerization of synthetic rubber and much of the synthetic rubber produced today is made following the teachings of United States Rubber Company patents." The distinguished achievements of the Chemical Division in evolving new formulae and manufacturing new chemicals over a period of many years made eminently logical the location in Naugatuck of one of the four government-sponsored synthetic plants.

Designs for the synthetic plant took shape during 1940, in May 1941 the building contract was let, and by September 1942 production was coming off the line. The plant, erected along the river below the chemical and regenerating shops, consisted of solid brick buildings topped by a strange looking superstructure of steel. Nearby stood great spherical storage containers for butadiene and the now famous "burning stack" for the safe dissipation of waste gases. Today the "burning stack" capped with a pilot light that never goes out has become Naugatuck's special landmark. The plant was originally designed as a 2,500 ton unit, but its capacity was increased almost at once and within a year it was producing 30,000 tons annually. Three hundred and fifty men were

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employed here each of whom turned out approximately 517,000 pounds of synthetic rubber in the course of the war years, over 181,000,000 pounds altogether.

These magnificent results, however, could not have been obtained without the continuing brilliant work of the research staff at the chemical plant. At the outset the great trouble lay in making synthetic rubber which could be processed on existing rubber mill machinery. For the first tough, unwieldy substance, the polymers, could not be handled without redesigning mills and calenders to take the additional strains, a time-consuming and expensive task. By systematic investigation Naugatuck chemists overcame the difficulty through utilization of a rare chemical which, added to the polymerization system, produced a soft, easily processable rubber. Though scientists shortly unearthed an obscure German patent covering O E I, as the chemical was called, they also found that no one had realized its potentialities, that it had never been used commercially, and that nowhere in the world were there facilities for manufacturing it. But again the Naugatuck Chemical saved the day by developing the techniques necessary for its manufacture and then building a first plant to produce O E I in quantity. Exchange of polymerization formulae among all the participants in the government program followed, with unanimous adoption of the United States Rubber Company's method. Later the company designed and built for the Defense Plant Corporation a second O E I unit, which, together with the first, produced enough O E I to keep synthetic rubber in large-scale production. Meanwhile the Naugatuck Chemical engineers developed a finishing line of their own design and readapted equipment to handle synthetic rubber efficiently. Thus in thirty months of intensive work scientists achieved a synthetic which rivalled in most respects natural rubber, the best processing of which had taken sixty years to perfect.

All through the war Naugatuck chemists, exemplifying the company motto, "Serving through Science," carried on a



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varied research program. Ninety-eight new varieties of synthetic rubber were developed as well as marked improvements in the first known types. Non-discoloring synthetics for soles and heels of shoes, for insulated wire, and for extruded mechanical goods, foam rubber, and resin soap rubber were among the significant new developments. A reclaiming process for the expensive synthetic material called VINYLITE used in Army raincoats and Signal Corps covering materials was another achievement; by this process, using only available equipment, the company salvaged 1,309,000 pounds in eighteen months. Only less important were VIBRIN, a new thermo-setting plastic, and KOTOL, a strippable plastic coating for protecting planes during shipment overseas on decks of freighters and tankers. KOTOL was produced in large volume toward the end of the war.

Output of better-known products meanwhile did not slacken. Indeed sulphuric acid for neighboring metal industries and SPERGON, the agricultural chemical calculated to protect the yield of food crops, were manufactured in greater quantity than ever before. Dispersions, suspensions or emulsions of rubber and rubber-like materials in water, replaced natural rubber latex in the fabrication of many necessary articles, while LOTOLS, compounded rubber latices, were manufactured for insulating assault wire for combat communications. The millions of pounds of rubber chemicals turned out were essential to the processing of about 30,000 different rubber products ranging from mammoth fuel cells for the B-29's that bombed Tokyo to the tiny stoppers on bottles of blood plasma.

Before Pearl Harbor the Chemical Division had been far-sighted enough to build great storage tanks for liquid concentrated latex so that there was on hand here the largest reserve supply anywhere in America. But even with this reserve, in the first weeks of the war the rapid disappearance of stocks of natural rubber in the United States not only urged on the synthetic program; it also pushed rubber reclamation.

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As the months passed, the piles of used tires and other items of old rubber that lined the river bank in the regenerating plant yards mounted higher and higher till the great black chutes and high bricked walls of the factory building resembled a towering mediaeval fortress entrenched behind a thick outer wall with the river serving as a moat beyond. Seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day steam shovels bit into the piles of tires and fed tons of used rubber into the mill to be reprocessed. And daily from the railroad siding and from heavy trucks more lots came rolling in. Within the plant near the first series of hoppers hour after hour women tested by touching to a red-hot electric plate each segment of rubber in order to heat it enough to make its odor indicate whether it were natural, reprocessed, or synthetic rubber. For each kind had to be processed separately: through the crackers, the digesters, the washers and driers, the strainers and the mills, to be slabbed out and shipped to other war industries. With 250 employees the plant reached a production of 36,000 tons a year of this essential war material.

The Footwear Division of the rubber company had a somewhat different story. Dwindling supplies of raw rubber after Pearl Harbor soon pointed either to curtailed operations or to manufacture of new lines. But though in the course of the first year of the war employment in the shoe shops dropped 20 per cent—partly accounted for by the drafting of several hundred young men—the company quickly developed vitally important articles which the Naugatuck shops were prepared to make. Many of these items used no rubber at all. To the manufacture in 1941 of bullet-sealing gas fuel cells for every type of aircraft, and manufacture of the Morner life-saving suits demanded by the Coast Guard and the Merchant Marine, the company added the next year inflatable boats, life rafts, and ten-ton pneumatic pontoons for bridge building. Engineers in Naugatuck also worked out the specifications for building barrage balloons. Making the fuel cells and inflatable boats and life rafts was particularly difficult,



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partly because they were big and partly because the synthetic THIOKOL and cements had a nauseating odor and were hard to handle. The shops where these large articles were made were stripped of the conveyors and completely rearranged. People had to be carefully taught how to use the new cements and how to assemble the numerous pieces, many of which looked confusingly similar. But production in the course of a few months was stepped up and in less than four years the Naugatuck plant turned out approximately 78,000 fuel cells.

In addition, manufacture of footwear went on. Besides rubbers and gaiters for men in regular branches of the service, special shoes for particular purposes were soon rolling off the conveyors—shoe pacs for the mountain troops, aviators' winter flying shoes, mukluks, jungle boots for men in the tropics, sea boots for submarine crews, waders for the engineers. Ingenious use of plastics, textiles, and leather contrived to stretch the shrinking supply of natural rubber until synthetic was available in quantity. In spite of having to devise new methods of manufacture—adaptations of both materials and processing—with decreased personnel the footwear plant succeeded in turning out the largest volume of essential articles in its history.

While no other industry faced equal difficulties, because no other plant was so handicapped for want of its basic raw material, Peter Paul had an only lesser problem when loss of the Philippines cut off the supply of cocoanut, the chief ingredient of the company's best selling candy. Finding a new source of cocoanut in islands in the Carribean and Central America could answer only if shipping could be found to transport it to this country. This difficulty Peter Paul met by purchasing a fleet of small 35 to 500 ton auxiliary schooners which German submarines considered too small to sink. The schooners, however, not only brought in cocoanut for Peter Paul but information useful to the Navy on the whereabouts of enemy submarines. Moreover, the com-

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pany was able to supply the chemical industry with coconut shells for manufacture of activated carbon for gas masks and high explosives. Since candy was known to be a quickly energizing food the Quartermaster Corps from the beginning of the war bought large quantities of Peter Paul candy-bars for Post Exchanges and later introduced "Choclettos" into "C" and "K" combat rations. At the height of the war Peter Paul was packing 5,000,000 of these candy bars monthly into these ration units.

Every manufacturer in Naugatuck, as indeed producers in all sections of the country, had to struggle with some shortages—tin, copper, lumber, steels, especially tool steels, and, most of all, manpower. In coping with these shortages the Risdon Company, by devising methods of saving critical materials and man-hours, probably made its most distinguished contribution to the war effort. For though the company produced a long list of items, all requiring precision work kept to exacting tolerances, its engineers rendered a still greater service in the redesign of parts for ordnance, radio, radar, and aircraft that permitted fabrication from sheet metal at fractional expenditure of time. Every plant had to increase production with fewer hands at work. The 9,500 workers in Naugatuck factories before Pearl Harbor had shrunk to less than 7,000 in the fall of 1944. And every concern employed people overtime, Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, sometimes hiring housewives, schoolteachers, high school students, bank clerks and others for part-time work as well. At the foundry where much of the work was too heavy for women and over-age men, the manpower problem was so acute that the company resorted to importing a few negroes from White Plains, New York. Since housing for these negroes was not available in the borough, they had to commute daily by bus, two hours every morning and two every evening. Such handicaps to efficiency notwithstanding, month after month there poured from the foundry thousands of malleable iron tank clutches, Navy valves, anti-aircraft



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gun brackets, 75 millimeter shells, submarine detector castings and the like.

Naugatuck's war-time difficulties were not unique. Whether due to lack of materials and tools, to delay in transport, or to labor turnover and absenteeism born of cumulative fatigue, nearly overwhelming obstacles to production were common to all manufacturing communities. Naugatuck's distinction lay not so much in the success with which these problems were met as in the variety of essential commodities the shops here turned out. In addition to the rubber and synthetic rubber goods, the chemicals and the candy, the malleable iron and aluminum castings, and the metal components of the Risdon Company, Naugatuck factories produced underwater submarine detectors, mechanisms for the atomic bomb development, torpedo explorer mechanisms, and aircraft control instruments made by the Bristol Company; the Lewis air-cooled engine cylinder thermometers and fighter aircraft control devices; the Butterfield molded plastic gas mask exhaust valves and insulators for electrical units of aircraft and naval vessels; Russell chains, buckles, and slide fasteners for Morner life-saving suits; precision tools and gages; and crystals for dials and instrument panels of ships, tanks, and airplanes made in quantity by the Naugatuck Glass Company. The list could be extended almost indefinitely. Each company had its specialties, often the exclusive developments of the particular company, the results of scientific research and years of experimentation; each had its own manufacturing problems; each met its production schedules efficiently. Three companies won Army-Navy "E" awards, and others, as sub-contractors, played a role in winning "E" awards for primary contractors. Corporations not themselves manufacturing war matériel also did their part, such as the work performed by the Naugatuck Lumber Company in providing containers and packing cases for outgoing shipments.

Illustrative of the type of problem management had to

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solve was the difficulty the Lewis Engineering Company encountered when delicate test instruments made in its shop proved on assembly to be faulty. Investigation revealed that the young women in the assembly room had occasionally been powdering their noses in the room and microscopic particles of face powder had lodged within the assembled mechanisms. As soon as the women working on the job were forbidden to take compacts into that section of the shop, the trouble stopped and perfect assemblies emerged.

Still when all has been said about the ingenuity with which industrial management evolved effective production methods in the face of unforeseeable difficulties, it was the ordinary working people of America who turned out the goods—the clothing, the foodstuffs, the munitions, the aircraft, and the tanks. While Naugatuck companies provided the facilities, it was the factory wage-earners that kept the machines in operation.

In 1941, in order to improve labor relations, the United States Rubber Company adopted a wage guarantee plan whereby an employee's earnings would not fall more than five points below his previous four weeks' average earnings, with the stipulation that in no case would the guarantee be more than 100 per cent efficiency or less than 90 per cent efficiency after six months from the date of employment. Here was a foreshadowing of the comprehensive annual wage guarantee which the CIO was to make one of its primary country-wide objectives in the post-war era. Everywhere, until the time of the War Labor Board's freezing decree, wages rose, but even fat weekly pay envelopes could not wholly compensate for the fatigue that mounted week after week as the nation's drive for increased output intensified.

In the days of growing tension before Pearl Harbor, the CIO rubber workers' union negotiated its first written contract with the company. Laboratory workers, clerical and supervisory employees were excluded from union membership; and anyone who was promoted to a management posi-



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tion was to be furnished with an honorable withdrawal certificate supplied by the union. The contract also contained a maintenance of membership clause which applied to all covered by the contract. The machinists, who were members of the AF of L International Machinists' Union, did not come under this. In contrast to the post World War II system when the "Big Four" of the rubber industry jointly determined basic rates, local company engineers set schedules for the standard day's performance. Production standards were peculiarly hard to set because much of the work was new. Vacations with pay were agreed upon, in itself a provision little short of revolutionary by America's standards of the 1930's. On the whole, that first written contract was satisfactory. In July 1944, a new election in the plant swung the machinists into the CIO camp. An endeavor a year later on the part of the AF of L to unite the whole shop under the AF of L banner was unsuccessful. In the interim two other CIO locals came into existence, at the chemical plant No. 218, and at the synthetic rubber plant No. 308. Both of these were granted charters by the United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum and Plastic Workers of America.

The unions found company officials fair to deal with and ready to stand by an agreement without quibbling once it had been made, and all through the war relations between the union leaders and management were cordial. In fact, the chief sources of trouble were within the unions themselves, as rival factions threatened to oust the responsible agent or other union officials. Such internal dissensions fortunately were always patched up enough to keep the plants running and the outer surface of things calm. Work stoppages occurred, but rarely for more than an hour while one department or another thrashed out some departmental difficulty. More intensive intelligent efforts of the Industrial Relations department made some headway in educating workers into an appreciation of the advantages to themselves of the conveyor racks and other labor-saving installations and so

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dug at the roots of the most serious fundamental problems of labor-management relations of the past.

Stirred doubtless by the ease with which the rubber workers had obtained a contract, and affected by the country-wide sweep of unionization, unions emerged between 1942 and 1944 at the foundry, and at the Butterfields' plant. Vigorous objection to the checkoff or maintenance of union membership failed to stem the tide now running in the direction of full recognition of the new power of organized labor.

It is probably testimony to the extraordinary, continued self-sufficiency of New England towns and cities that, in spite of the long-established strength of unions in Waterbury's brass foundries, Naugatuck, geographically close enough to be virtually an outlying section of that great industrial city, kept itself so long out of the main currents of American industrial life. In techniques of manufacture and scientific industrial research the borough ranked with the most progressive communities in the country; in labor relations conformity to the usual pattern of unionization had lagged. By local stockholders, company officers, and plant managers this delay was considered a mark of distinction, a successful warding off of involvement in an unwholesome labor program which could only end in both local workers' and owners' losing all freedom of action. They believed Naugatuck's keeping free of large-scale labor organization for so much longer than neighboring cities gave evidence of employers' fair-mindedness and deep-seated, sound employee relationships. In the face of this attitude of business leaders, opinion of wage-earners, always less articulate, is not so easy to gauge. Certainly many of the older men and women who had been employed in Naugatuck factories for years were not enthusiastic over the new order. And the fact that unionization took no hold in the smaller plants indicates that where contacts between shopowner and shop hands were close neither wished the existing scheme of things to change. Nevertheless, since unions did develop in the bigger plants,



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we must conclude that the rank and file of working people by 1944 welcomed unionization.

In spite of the high wages, the full employment, and the general prosperity of the manufacturing companies, many people felt sharply the pinch of war restrictions. Though there was money to spend there was so little to buy that merchants were at times hard pressed. Price ceilings on most goods added greatly to the clerical work involved in the simplest sale and every store was shorthanded. Building contractors and suppliers of building materials were hit still harder unless, like Megin, they had industrial maintenance contracts or, like the Naugatuck Lumber Company, undertook to furnish boxing and crates for local war plants. Even the banks suffered: the Savings Bank because many borrowers paid off their loans, and with no house building permitted, new loans were few; the Naugatuck National because commercial loans were now frequently negotiated through the government; and both banks because they were forced to invest largely in government bonds, safe but not very profitable. The Savings Bank, therefore, had to cut its interest rate to 2 per cent, higher than that of many banks but scarcely more than half what it had previously paid depositors. Yet ultimately both banks emerged stronger than ever. Deposits at the National Bank by 1944 stood at about \$8,500,000, while deposits at the Savings Bank mounted to \$8,762,000 from over 10,500 people, 60 per cent of all borough residents.

### *Impact on the Community*

No one faintly aware of what peoples in other parts of the world were enduring in these years could feel that Americans were in dire material distress, but neither could anyone ignore wholly the sheer discomforts of life. Naugatuck was no worse off for housing than other industrial cities; yet every home was filled to capacity and long-distance commut-

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ing was common. Two families or more shared quarters designed for one; practically all householders, no matter how well-to-do or how wishful of preserving the privacy of their homes, rented spare rooms in order to ease the shortage of accommodations. In finding rooms for newcomers the Chamber of Commerce was of particular service. People walked the hilly streets to work or to market in order to save gas and tires; they stood in queues waiting their turn to buy what was available; they donned coats or sweaters to keep warm when fuel was too scarce adequately to heat their houses. Most disturbing for the ill and old or the mothers of small children was the want of medical attention: overworked doctors could scarcely cover their rounds and the hospitals nearby were crowded. Still through all the real anxieties and minor annoyances people managed to keep an air of good cheer, restraining their grumbling to the "griping" that made all men kin.

While the primary job for industrial Naugatuck was producing the essential articles for total war, for every citizen there was the scarcely less urgent necessity of reshaping numberless phases of community life to fit the new conditions imposed by world events. Across the desks of the Draft Board passed the papers of nearly 9,000 men, residents of Cheshire, Wolcott, and Prospect, as well as of Naugatuck itself. Over 2,000 men and women of the borough departed to fight, to nurse, or to serve the government or the Red Cross in other capacities. Sixty-seven men gave their lives. In the eight War Loan Drives Naugatuck campaigners found ready support: purchases of bonds totalled \$22,934,247.

The Ration Board, established in April 1942, staffed by Naugatuck schoolteachers and one paid clerk, had the thankless task of doling out coupons, first for sugar, then for gasoline, typewriters, bicycles, and footwear. But the schoolteachers and others who passed upon the legitimacy of each appeal were confronted with a still more trying situation when rationing of fuel oil became necessary in the fall of



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1942. When, after registration and laborious figuring of floor space of homes to be heated, householders discovered that the basic formula used by the Ration Board was incorrect, necessitating the refiguring of all the computations, an additional horde of volunteers had to be recruited to hurry through the paper work in order to issue the coupons before the onslaught of bitter winter weather. Shoes, meat, lard, butter, and all processed foods—rationing here involved difficult decisions affecting the health of the elderly and the sick. The responsibility in time became so great that the local board requested a board of doctors in Hartford to render verdicts on the granting of exceptions based on certificates from Naugatuck physicians. Tires, canning sugar, and finally price controls created other problems both for the Ration Board and for every family in town.

The organization and functioning of the civilian defense program, the salvage drives for waste paper, tin cans, metals, rubber, and fats, and the enlisting of volunteers for local Red Cross and other humanitarian activities, all added to the demands upon the time, ingenuity, and good will of men, women and children. In working out ways and means of coping with these puzzling, new, urgent needs Naugatuck's problem was like that of most other American communities, save that the concentration of war plants in the borough made careful planning for emergency measures more vitally important than for less industrialized towns. Full co-operation was essential and every group, every corporation, gave it. Any lingering latent hostility to the rubber company now disappeared, for the sharpest critic of the absentee-owned company could see how generously it gave of time, money, and interest to civic projects.

Naugatuck's Defense Council was launched in the summer of 1941 under the guidance of Clarence Jones, appointed by the Warden to organize it. In addition to the public services, such as police and fire protection, the Council started out with fifteen other divisions, each under the

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leadership of a particular person. Two years later two main units were created, the Citizen's Defense Corps to supervise all protective services, such as the Air Raid and Medical Divisions, and the Citizens' Service Corps under which came direction of victory gardens, good conservation, salvage, and the like. Recruitment of volunteers for these tasks offered no problem. Some 3,000 men and women cheerfully trained and kept themselves in readiness for any call, participating in practice drills, or sweating through the labor and discomforts of collecting waste paper, weeding vegetable gardens, and canning foodstuffs.

Five hundred and sixty-nine volunteers enrolled as Air Raid Wardens, and after attending schools conducted by experts in bomb control, fire fighting, first aid, and other required techniques, took charge when warnings sounded. The Army Command in charge of the area more than once sent out warnings with no hint of their being only for practice; so control center personnel proceeded on the assumption that an actual attack was coming. In March 1942, the state Office of Civilian Defense called a first test air raid drill and blackout, and in the course of the next three years there were twenty-six more. In retrospect we may smile at the earnestness of the steel-helmeted, arm-banded wardens bustling about unlighted streets on blackout nights, but the danger of enemy raids was far from imaginary at the time and the selfless devotion of the men and women who gave time and energy to organizing the community for that prospective emergency must command only admiration and gratitude. So real was the sense of imminent raids that the local clergy were assigned regular posts from which they could be summoned quickly to administer last rites to the fatally injured and spiritual comfort to all in need of it.

An equally effective part of the civilian defense program was the equipping of a medical center at the Y.M.C.A. Doctors, nurses, and aides collaborated in arranging for this emergency casualty station. In the long-unused cafeteria



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and kitchen of the "Y," teams of women scrubbed, painted cupboards, and stored medical supplies. Two operating tables with powerful battery lights to be used if electric current gave out, surgical instruments, bandages, splints, and fifty cots supplied with bedding were in readiness by the time of the first air raid test. Later the medical center was used as a blood donor station. Less publicized than some of the other divisions but no less important was the planning of the Evacuation Division which carefully predetermined procedures in case of a raid necessitating evacuation of local people.

One hundred auxiliary police, sworn in as deputies, specially trained in first aid and traffic control, and 300 auxiliary firemen made up other units of the civilian defense organization. The latter, given lessons in extinguishing incendiaries, in detecting and correcting fire hazards, and in fire-fighting generally, were able to put into practice some of their knowledge when assigned to burning off dead grass and rubbish lying in vacant lots.

The Water Company was also called upon to take special precautions in order to protect the borough's water supply. Working in conjunction with the state Public Utilities Commission and state health and police authorities, company officials made surveys of the water shed and then posted guards about reservoirs and equipment installations. All personnel of the Water Company was sworn in as special police, and guard was maintained twenty-four hours a day. Sterilized tank trucks were ready to distribute water to any section of town if bombing damaged water mains. But the obligations of the Water Company did not end here. As twenty-four-hour operation of Naugatuck factories required a larger volume of water than ever before, eking out the supply became essential. Introduction of water meters saved about 800,000 gallons a day, but the increased consumption brought water reserves so low that a prolonged drought would have rendered them inadequate. To meet this situa-

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tion the company first opened up the Candee reservoir, which had not been drawn on in thirty years, and then installed a well and a high pressure pump capable of supplying 500,000 gallons daily. Thus the increase in consumption, about 328,000,000 gallons larger per year in 1945 than in 1939, was handled.

Allied with the work of the Defense Council but wholly under Army Air Corps control was the Air Warden Service for "plane spotting." Before radar was perfected the ground observer had to act as "the eyes of the Air Force" to identify every plane in the sky. In Naugatuck the service was begun on a test basis as early as January 1941. When the war came the American Legion in Connecticut undertook the responsibility of obtaining personnel and organizing posts. Within four days of Pearl Harbor Naugatuck had its post established on Millville Avenue, telephones connected, and 200 volunteers working in unbroken succession in four-hour or two-hour shifts, day and night. Throughout the first winter of the war all observing was done outdoors regardless of weather. But the next winter a tower with a walk around it and a kitchen were added to the original building. Until October 1943 the post was never unmanned. Then, by order of the Air Force, observation was reduced to one day a week and in May 1944 when radar stations were sufficiently numerous the service was inactivated altogether. Thirteen plane-spotters received medals in recognition of the 500 hours or more they had given to this service.

Though an enemy invasion of the United States such as threatened Great Britain was probably never seriously anticipated after 1942, the danger of a quick surprise raid or sabotage made expansion of the State Guard wise. But lack of firearms and ammunition with which to equip new units presented a difficulty. The answer was found in enlisting sportsmen who owned rifles or shotguns and so could provide their own. Through the efforts of the Naugatuck Fish and Game Club the Naugatuck Rangers came into being as



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a reserve company of the Connecticut State Guard. About seventy-five men including three officers served from February 1943 till after V E Day taking part in maneuvers, establishing road blocks, serving as patrolmen and, trained to fight forest fires, being on call for any emergency.

Not only did citizens rally to the jobs of community protection, they staunchly shouldered the less dramatic tasks. Of the vitally important but wholly prosaic jobs none was more effectively organized than the food conservation program. Victory gardens sprang up along the roadsides, on the Town Farm, on lawns and on land ordinarily unused. At the public library the borough War Gardens Committee assembled books and pamphlets to help the inexperienced amateur, and agricultural specialists were brought to Naugatuck to speak at gardeners' meetings. School children, encouraged to start their own gardens, had special plots set aside for them, and many children as well as adults joined the Land Army to give much needed aid to farmers of the vicinity. As the borough's farm and garden project developed into a large-scale undertaking, canning food grown at home became another major job. Scores of women and girls spent long hours over hot stoves in the high school domestic science room preserving the vegetables and fruits grown in the Victory gardens. As a result Naugatuck never lacked ample food supplies.

Humanitarian activities also assumed large proportions. While work of the Production Corps of the local Red Cross had never wholly stopped since the first World War, after 1939 Naugatuck women worked with new zeal to produce thousands of garments for destitute people in Europe. Week in and week out 270 women made so many clothes and surgical dressings that more storage space was needed, and in 1942 the work rooms were moved from the chapter house to the more roomy Y.M.C.A. In every humanitarian service the chapter had a share, whether in training women for home-nursing, for emergency mass care in some thirty-seven shel-

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ters in the borough, or in conducting the blood bank. Fifteen men and women in Naugatuck earned membership in the Gallon Club for donating eight pints of blood.

When servicemen left Naugatuck many groups joined together to lighten the occasion as much as possible; a clergyman was always present; the Red Cross canteen served coffee; the Rotary Club gave each man a gift and had a club member on hand at farewell ceremonies. The Elks, the Odd Fellows, the Knights of Columbus, the Masons, the Woodmen of the World, in fact every fraternal organization, sent presents to men overseas and at home carried on programs for their benefit. The Salvation Army unostentatiously also contributed to the peace of mind and physical comfort of needy people in the borough.

The emotional stress and material discomfort inevitable in a community caught up in the currents of war greatly magnified the problem of protecting children as much as possible from all the turmoil of the adult world about them. By intelligent planning teachers and parents succeeded in sharing with schoolchildren the responsibility for community welfare without overburdening them with a sense of their own youthful inadequacies. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Junior Red Cross members, church groups of young people, each learned what particular services it could assume, and all groups worked unflaggingly. Boy Scouts collected waste-paper and tin. Girl Scouts canned food. Junior Red Crossers campaigned for books, for clothes, for funds, and gave clerical assistance and hours of work to making articles for both wounded and able-bodied soldiers and sailors. Older girls and boys frequently had part-time jobs in local factories, thus gaining the double advantage of adding to the family income and simultaneously furthering war production. The Day Nursery continued to function for children of working mothers, although to meet requirements of the state Commission the local Board had to accept funds from the state and subject the Naugatuck nursery to state rulings. Whether



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cared for at home or in part at the Day Nursery, most children in Naugatuck came through these years rather matured than stunted by the demands of war.

Below the high school level there were no changes in school curriculum. For senior high school boys soon to be drafted some additional courses were offered in mathematics and physics useful for aviation. But most innovations were for the benefit of the night school students whose ambitions were pricked by the new opportunities opening to anyone possessed of some technical knowledge. Nearly 650 students enrolled in the evening school in 1940-41, two thirds of them in the general high school courses; but 257 foreign-born elected classes in English and citizenship. In 1944-45, 217 people obtained American citizenship papers as a result of their studies in the adult education courses.

Though the peak of high school enrollment was reached before the war and by 1944 had dropped to the 1931 level, cost of schooling in the borough rose each year. In hopes of maintaining a teaching staff in competition with all the well-paying industrial jobs open to people in the valley, the Board of Education in 1942 increased teachers' salaries by 10 per cent as a cost of living bonus. This placed the budget at a new high, and, price ceilings notwithstanding, the greater cost of all items brought expenditures for education to \$253,599 in 1944.

Fortunately not all items of borough administration grew proportionately, and most other departments kept their costs below their allotments. Particularly cheering was the decline in public welfare expense, although some critics questioned whether economies were not limiting needed services in the community. Between 1941 and 1944 the budget for poor relief was dropped from \$60,000 to \$35,000, and actual expenses declined from \$40,517 to \$31,220. Here was testimony to the immediate benefits of full employment in the town.

It is not surprising, therefore, that in spite of the anxieties and heaviness of heart born by many citizens whose sons and

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husbands were far from home undergoing discomfort, danger, and hardship, Naugatuck as a whole faced the future with confidence. The doldrums of the 1930's were past and the borough could well feel that as a community it had learned some useful lessons. Experience had shown that the borough must make the well-being of its citizens its first consideration. Health, public works, housing, education, fire protection could never again be neglected in order to save taxation in any particular year. Public planning and sharing of public responsibility by all freemen of the borough promised to attain a new high level. Differences of opinion about methods of achieving the desired goals of course continued; labor unions and factory managers, teachers in the schools and parents of school children, borough employees and borough administrators would not always agree upon the measures to be taken. But a new spirit of unity of purpose and hopefulness pervaded all Naugatuck. The prospects of peaceable, permanently constructive adjustments to a post-war regime were bright.

Proof of the stoutness of heart with which the town met the anxious days of 1944 and looked courageously to what the future might bring may be seen in the celebration carried out to mark the hundredth anniversary of the establishment of Naugatuck as an independent town. Nine days after D-day in Europe the whole community dedicated itself to staging a dignified commemoration of the day a hundred years before when the village green had been the scene of the first town meeting. The contrast in circumstance was poignant: the quiet of the New England village of 1844, staid townspeople lining up on either side of the moderator's stand under the recently-planted elm trees to vote by voice for the first officers to watch over the public affairs of 3,000 people, their horses stabled in the horse-sheds nearby until, the meeting concluded, farmers, shopowners, shop hands and village storekeepers should harness up and drive off over the dirt roads to light the lamps at home and eat their hearty New England



## THE IMPACT OF WAR

suppers; and in 1944 the throngs of over 10,000 people all involved in the griefs of a war-ridden world, the hum of factory machinery still running on twenty-four-hour schedule, automobiles parked along the electric-lighted pavements, a huge marquee stretched out over the heavily-shaded lawn of the Tuttle homestead where the centennial pageant was performed by hundreds of participants. A citizens' committee undertook painstaking research to produce a script for the pageant which portrayed accurately scenes from the town's early years. So history was called upon to remind citizens of 1944 of how the present had been built out of the past by the hard work, the faith, and the goodwill of generations gone by. No one could doubt that years to come could produce achievements equally great as long as every dweller in Naugatuck devoted himself with selflessness to the task.

## *Notes on Old Houses*

ALTHOUGH the development of town and borough has brought about the demolition of most of the old homesteads and fire has cost the loss of others, there are several eighteenth or early nineteenth century houses still standing in Naugatuck, chiefly in the Pond Hill vicinity and near Fulling Mill brook.

West of the river where industrial growth has made heaviest inroads upon the landmarks of the past, eighteenth-century houses that remain have been so remodelled and modernized as to make them of scant architectural interest. The one notable exception is the John Lewis house on Spencer Street, long known as the "Old Hard House" now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Lorin Schoene. Built about 1735 and given to his son by the first Joseph Lewis, the house is the oldest in the borough. Externally its antiquity is not immediately apparent, but many features of the interior reveal its early eighteenth century origins—heavy hand-hewn oak beams, wide oak floor boards, the oak clapboarding still visible in the attic, the foundation walls of field stone laid dry without mortar, and the fireplaces, one with a Dutch oven in the old wainscot-panelled kitchen or "keeping-room." Throughout the framing is oak, the massive beams fitted together with tusk-tenon-and-mortise joints. The great house and three barns standing on the 150 acre farm remained in the Lewis family until 1846 when William B. Lewis sold it. In Millville probably the oldest house is Jobamah Gunn's, erected in 1791 and now in the possession of the Anderson family.

East of the river, just north of Fulling Mill Brook and a stone's throw from the Waterbury turnpike, stands the Thomas Porter house, built about 1752. The harmonious proportions of its story-and-a-half proclaim its age. The interior has been greatly altered but some of the broad floor boards and the fireplace and Dutch oven remain to remind the visitor of the day when the house served as an inn for Revolutionary soldiers.

Further up the brook the house known today as the "Burr Johnson place" was built about 1756. William Hoadley gave the



## NOTES ON OLD HOUSES

land on a hillside above the brook to his daughter, Sarah, as a dower when she married Israel Caulkins. Sarah's father-in-law, Roswell, built the house for the couple. But they had little time to enjoy it together for Israel went off to the wars in Canada in 1757, was captured by the French, and because of a series of subsequent misadventures did not get back to this country until 1778. Sarah, however, lived on in the house until some time after 1800 when she sold it to Burr Johnson. Here Hubert Johnson grew up, the beloved principal of the Union Center high school for some years.

A charming old farmhouse built about 1810 on Hopkins Hill is another of the most venerable survivals in the borough. While it is called the "Hopkins house," it was built by Elias Ford of Wallingford. Squire Ford's daughter married Samuel Hopkins, later deacon of the Congregational church, and Deacon Samuel and his wife lived here for many years and their descendants after them to this day. In a large room upstairs Harmony Lodge, the first Masonic Lodge in the village, held its meetings before 1860.

The house in which Charles Goodyear lived as a boy early in the nineteenth century is also still in existence, although it is now so hemmed in by additions and other buildings that it is scarcely recognizable. Tucked in behind stores and sheds on the corner of Main and Bridge Streets it is, however, still to be viewed, still able to stir the imagination of the historically-minded by its very stark simplicity.

On the back road to Waterbury skirting the hills near the Prospect line there is Gideon Oscar Hotchkiss' house, built presumably around 1835. About the same time Hezekiah Hine erected his house where for years he made pocketbooks and later bone buttons. Neither house has distinctive architectural features.

No other homesteads of equal antiquity are known. The numerous substantial houses along North Church Street and the roads above it date from the 1870's and 1880's or later, when domestic architecture contrived comfort but not great beauty of line.

## *Bibliographical Note*

THE materials upon which this history has been based are of five main types: published histories of Waterbury and environs, official records, newspaper and periodical articles, private papers owned by individuals, organizations, or the Howard Whittemore Memorial Library, and word-of-mouth accounts obtained in interviews with townspeople exceptionally well-informed upon particular subjects. In the last category my debt is especially heavy, for every citizen qualified to speak with authority has been generous of time in providing me with data which only he or she could supply. Many residents of Naugatuck have also kindly submitted photographs of the town and borough. Most of the illustrations in this volume, however, are reproduced from the Harry A. Dalby collection in the Howard Whittemore Memorial Library.

For the chapters covering the colonial period I have relied largely upon Henry Bronson's *The History of Waterbury, Connecticut*, published in 1858, and Joseph Anderson's *The Town and City of Waterbury, Connecticut*, 1896. Supplementing these is the volume published by the Mattatuck Historical Society, *Proprietors' Records of the Town of Waterbury, Connecticut*. Bronson and Anderson also were useful for information about Salem down to the date of Naugatuck's incorporation, while W. G. Lathrop's study, *The Brass Industry in Connecticut*, 1909, added some fragments to the story of the early button-makers of the region. The sketch map of the approximate location of dwellings in 1735 is based upon manuscript notes carefully prepared by William Ward of Naugatuck, 1835-1910, who, after exhaustive study of the books of Waterbury Deeds and Highways, translated the eighteenth-century landmarks into those identifiable in the nineteenth century. William Ward's note books and papers are deposited in the Howard Whittemore Memorial Library. Here also is Ward's published history of the *Early Schools of Naugatuck* containing excerpts from early School District records and much interesting comment. The manuscript Town Records



## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

of Waterbury supplied little usable material not contained in the published histories.

The beautifully preserved records of the First Church of Christ in Salem are deposited in the Connecticut State Library in Hartford, but photostated bound volumes of the church records, 1783-1903, are in possession of the clerk of the church. These, together with the less detailed records of St. Michael's church in the keeping of the vestrymen of St. Michael's, offer the most complete picture available of the daily life of Judd's Meadows and Salem. Miscellaneous contracts and notes relating chiefly to Milo Lewis and the warp mill, papers owned by Earl Barnum of Naugatuck, a few letters of John Hull dating from 1831 to 1842, and an account book of Nicholas Scoville's store in Gunntown, 1797-1802, furnish the only other pertinent primary sources for the period before 1844.

Fortunately after the town was incorporated primary sources multiply. The Town Records themselves are informing, while Assessors' Records of the Union City district for 1855, owned by Mr. Harold W. Brown of Naugatuck, give clues to the industrial life of the Fulling Mill brook region of that period. The single most important source for the industrial history of Naugatuck from 1850 to 1880, however, is the manuscript Enumerators' schedules of the federal census reports, 1850, 1860, 1870 and 1880. These manuscripts, preserved in the State Library in Hartford, are a mine of rewardingly detailed information. The corresponding data for 1890 have been lost by fire and from 1900 on are still rated as confidential and not available to the public.

Town directories, particularly the first and second prepared by a local citizen in 1877 and 1883, are of considerable value, though these diminish in significance when combined with the Waterbury directories after 1886. An interesting collection of papers relating to the development of rubber manufacture in Naugatuck is owned by the United States Rubber Company. Excerpts from these were published at the time of the centennial of rubber making here in 1943, in *Nauganotes* and *100 Years*, issued by the company. The story of the growth of the iron foundry cannot be so well documented. Deeds and partnership agreements are in the possession of Donald Tuttle of Middlebury and Naugatuck, grandson of one of the founders. The rest of that history was

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put into a typescript in 1920 by John Hayes, an employee of the corporation from 1903 on. Careful interviewing of people still living in 1920 supplied Mr. Hayes with fairly complete data, so that his pamphlet may be ranked virtually as a primary source. Useful original papers of other business enterprises have not come to light, and the diaries of local businessmen deal only with personal or social affairs.

Though a locally published newspaper first appeared in 1877, only two single copies of any Naugatuck newspaper have apparently survived until the files of the *Naugatuck Valley Advocate* begin in 1893. A sheaf of clippings of articles written by Henry Baldwin in 1885 and published in the *Review* have been kept and are housed in the town library. Baldwin's reminiscences of his boyhood in the 1850's give vivid glimpses of many aspects of the life of the community. For a view of Naugatuck's social life, second in value only to these are the address of Bishop Edwin S. Lines, *Personal Recollections of Naugatuck*, 1926, a paper read at the fiftieth anniversary of the consecration of St. Michael's church, and Charles S. Sherman's *Memorial Discourse in Commemoration of the National Centennial delivered in the Congregational Church, Naugatuck, Connecticut, July 9, 1876*. Similar though briefer articles by other people, notably Eliza Ward Barnum writing in 1921 of her childhood memories of the Civil War days and later, add color but few specific facts. Even Fred Engelhardt's small volume, *Fulling Mill Brook*, published in 1937, is more personal reminiscence than documented history, though the author painstakingly interviewed any survivors who could be expected to know anything of the history of the region. In 1895 the *Naugatuck Citizen* published the *Citizen Souvenir*, in part a "booster's" brochure, but still a well-illustrated, interesting booklet describing the new borough and its past. J. L. Rockey's *History of New Haven County*, published in 1892, contains somewhat similar data.

When the *Daily News* files begin in March 1896, the greatest stumbling block to obtaining knowledge of daily life in the borough is removed. Moreover, special issues dedicated to particular local events, such as the fiftieth anniversary of the *News* itself, the Goodyear Rubber centennial in 1943, and the 1944 centennial of Naugatuck, have brought together a mass of scat-



## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

tered facts otherwise difficult to locate. In a special issue of 1935, for example, appeared a long account of the rise of Peter Paul and an authoritative article written by the factory manager of the Chemical Company giving an expert's version of the spectacular scientific achievements and the history of that company. Especially valuable is the *News* of August 1, 1946, given over wholly to a summary of Naugatuck's efforts and accomplishments during the war. Feature articles about Naugatuck are also to be found from time to time in the *Waterbury American* and the *Waterbury Sunday Republican*. Not only the rubber company but other local corporations in the twentieth century have turned out booklets giving historical as well as current information about their businesses. Annual reports of the Board of Warden and Burgesses are published complete, and before 1921 the report of the Board of Education. Later reports of the Board of Education are kept in manuscript form in the office of the Superintendent of Schools.

The Chamber of Commerce has a considerable body of statistical material collected year by year since 1921 when the organization was formed. Through the courtesy of the Board of Directors the figures on employment, housing, and special projects have been put at my disposal. Otherwise no confidential business data of local enterprises have been available. Concerns now vanished have left no books and companies still operating are naturally loath to open their records for a history to be published and circulated locally. Serious a handicap though lack of such materials has been, the readiness of business executives and labor leaders, of citizens of every political complexion and of every walk of life to review the past, to discuss the situation of the present, and suggest the probable developments of the future have partly compensated for the lack of private written records.

## *Appendix I*

### *Location of First Allotments*

THE location of each man's holding in Judd's Meadows, as assigned in 1679, was sufficiently explicit to make it still identifiable. Beginning at the mouth of Hop brook the land was laid out in a "Great lot," reserved for the minister and in time duly given to Reverend John Southmayd. Next came the lot of Abraham Andrews, including the site of the present Union City railroad station. John Carrington, Benjamin Barnes, and John Welton also had their lots on Hop brook. William Judd's lot, the "Deacons meadow," began below the point where the Great hill meets the river, where the J. H. Whittemore house now stands, and extended below the present Maple Street bridge over the river. Next below the Deacon's meadow came the lots of John Judd, William Higginson and David Carpenter, the last lot lying on either side of Towantic or Long Meadow brook. No allotment was made on the hill "against the canoe place." Below this were the five lots of Joseph Gaylord, John Scoville, Edward Scott, Thomas Richason, and John Langton, respectively. The southernmost meadow lay at Strait's mountain. On the east side of the river beginning at Beacon Hill brook, John Newell had the first lot. Then came Benjamin Jones, Samuel Hickox, John Warner, Samuel Judd, Daniel Warner, Timothy Standley, Benjamin Judd, Thomas Warner, and Daniel Porter. The last lot ended a little south of Fulling Mill brook at the edge of the lands previously allotted.



## *Appendix II*

### *Ministers of the Salem Church*

THE pastors of the Salem Church were:

Mr. Abraham Fowler, January 12, 1785 to March 13, 1799

Mr. Jabez Chadwick, December 2, 1800 to March 1803

Reverend Stephen Dodd, 1811 to April 1817

Reverend Amos Pettengill, January 1823; died August 19, 1830

Reverend Seth Sackett, October 1834 to January 1838

Reverend Chauncey G. Lee, January 1838 to November 1840

The deacons were:

Samuel Lewis, 1783; died 1788

Gideon Hotchkiss, 1783; died 1807

Elisha Stevens, 1788; died 1813

Calvin Spencer, 1791; died 1846

Truman Porter, 1813; died 1838

Thaddeus Scott, 1813; died 1832

Lucian F. Lewis, 1834; removed 1853

Deacon Calvin Spencer, Deacon Elisha Stevens and Mr. Israel Terrill were on March 27, 1803, appointed ruling elders.

## *Appendix III*

### *The Records of the Church of Christ in Salem Anno Domini 1783*

#### The Confession of Faith:

- 1st We believe there is only one living and true God one in Essence in three distinct Persons the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost.
- 2ndly That God hath made all things of Nothing by the Word of his Power and Extends his Providence over all his Creatures ruling them for his own Glory.
- 3rdly That the Scriptures of the old and new Testament contain in them everything necessary to be believed by Us.
- 4thly That God created Man after his own Likeness, in knowledge and Holiness and consequently in a State of Innocence and Happiness (but in a mutable state) under a Covenant of Work and therefore liable to fall.
- 5th That Man continued not in that state, but our first Parents, We, and all Mankind, in together and with them fell from that Estate by sinning against God, and are by Nature children of Wrath & liable to the Pains of Hell forever.
- 6th That God hath not left all Mankind to perish in that Estate of sin and misery, but from all Eternity Elected some to everlasting Life & ordained to bring them into a State of Salvation by a Redeemer.
- 7th That the Lord Jesus Christ who is both God and Man, two distinct Natures, in one Person, is the only Redeemer of God's Elect, who hath offered up himself a Sacrifice unto God hath purchased everlasting Salvation for them and by his powerful and prevalent Intercession carries on the Work of Redemption sending his holy Spirit to Work Faith and Holiness in the Elect.
- 8th That the Spirit of God by working Faith in Us doth unite Us to Christ and makes Us spiritually Partakers of the



## APPENDIX

Benefits of his Death, and Righteousness, insomuch that they who believe in his Name are justified from the Guilt of Sin, accepted by God, as Righteous (though but in Part sanctified) in Spirits, Souls and Bodies and have a Right to all the Privileges of the Sons of God.

9th That God requires of Us, as necessary Duties (though not Meritorious Conditions of Salvation) Faith, Repentance, and Holiness with a diligent Use of all the Means appointed for the Application of Redemption, which are especially his Word contained in the old & New Testaments, the Sacraments of Baptism & the Lord Supper, Prayer and the Preaching of the Word.

10th That the moral Law doth forever bind all Persons to the Obedience thereof, and Christ in the Gospel doth not abate or dissolve but much Strengthens this Obligation.

11th We believe the general Resurrection of the Body with the Reunion of the Soul thereunto, so that they shall be jointly and together capable of being Subjects of Happiness or Misery to all Eternity.

12th The great and general Judgment, that at the last Day, the Son of Man attended with his holy Angels shall appear and sitting on a throne of Glory shall judge the world in Righteousness, the sum of which shall be the Wicked shall go away into everlasting Punishment but the Righteous into Life eternal.

(a) With regard to the Church we acknowledge that our Lord Jesus Christ hath but One Catholic Church and Kingdom, comprehending all that are United to him whether in Heaven or Earth and do conceive the whole Multitude of visible Believers credibly professing faith in Christ and obedience to him with their Infant deed, commonly called the visible Catholic Church to belong to Christs Spiritual Kingdom here upon Earth. That particular Societies of Christians credibly professing Faith in Christ and Obedience to him, statedly joined together for ordinary Communion with One another in all the Ordinances of Christ, are particular churches, and are to be owned as instituted Churches of Christ, though differing in Apprehension and practise in some lesser Matters.

## HISTORY OF NAUGATUCK

(b) That in Order to Persons being admitted as Members of the Church of Christ in full Communion in all the special Ordinances of the Gospel they ought to make a credible Profession of Holiness of real Friendship of Heart and cordial Subjection to Jesus Christ, and to be Persons without Scandal in their lives, sound in the Faith, and to a Judgment regulated by the Will of God, born of him, and the subjects of visible Holiness and Honesty. Such Persons and such only thereto have a Right to sealing Ordinances and to Baptism for their children. We conceive that a competent Member of such visible Saints, do become the capable Subjects of Stated Communion in all the special Ordinances of Christ upon their mutual declared Consent and Covenant to walk together in them according to Gospel Rule. That each particular Church hath a Right to chuse their own Officers and being furnished with such are duly qualified and Ordained according to the Gospel Rule, hath Authority from Christ for exercising and of enjoying all the Ordinances of Worship within itself.

(c) That the Pastor of the Church hath Authority from Christ to administer the Seals of the Covenant to the meet Subjects of them, to explain and enforce the great Doctrines and Duties of Christianity upon his Brothers and hearers, and to go before them in all things, no less in Matters of Discipline, than in Doctrine, Faith and Practice, and that acting in this Line the Brotherhood are to know him as over them, and obey, and submit to him in the Lord, but he hath no Right to make Laws or prescribe Rules of his own, or to put a Negative on the Church in any Case unless in matters merely official, in which Case he cannot be bound by the votes of the Brotherhood but hath Liberty of Conscience no less than all private Brethren, and must be allowed to act, or not, in Administring the Seals, or in the Discharge of other Parts of his office according to Conscience and the Apparent Will of God. We are of Opinion that Councils are warranted by the Word of God in weighty Matters for healing breaches con-



## APPENDIX

noting Difficulties and shewing churches and individual Brethren what is the Mind & Will of Christ in particular Cases, and that it is often the Duty of churches to employ their Help and advice and that they ought to have a reverential Regard to their Opinion and advice, and not to depart from it without evident Reasons founded in the Word of God. We are also of Opinion that Churches have Liberty to chuse such Council as they Conscientiously judge best adapted to answer the End aimed at, and not to be tied to any Certain Body of Men and in such Councils, Elders and Messengers should have an Equal Voice. That in so great and weighty a matter as the calling and chusing a Pastor it is ordinarily requisite that every church consult and advise with the Pastors of Neighboring Churches, though at the same time we judge that it ought to be at the Election of every church what Pastors they will advise with in such Case and that it is the Duty of Brethren to advise with those who will probably give them the best Assistance. Further we (d) agree that although it may not be amiss to admit Persons to occasional Communion with Us for a certain Time upon Letters of Recommendation from the Churches of which they are Members, yet as many of the Churches do not hold that the credible profession of real Friendship to Christ and holiness of heart are necessary in Order to Persons being admitted to full Communion with them & as there are many church members in this land both unsound in Doctrine, and immoral in their lives, we agree that we will not admit Persons thus recommended from Neighboring Churches to be fixed members of this church without obtaining some further Satisfaction with Regard to their Soundness in the Faith and real Friendship and Obedience to Christ than can be obtained from such Letters recommendatory.

Further we agree that all church Members ought to put themselves under the Care and Watch of some particular Churches and that we will not allow occasional Communion with Persons recommended from other Churches

## HISTORY OF NAUGATUCK

for a longer Term than twelve Months if they do not within this Term give us satisfaction with regard to their Soundness in the Faith and their true Allegiance to our Lord Jesus Christ we do not expect that they will any longer desire occasional Communion with Us.



*Appendix IV*

*Borough Government*

BOROUGH government as established in Connecticut is a modification of city government omitting some of the formal administrative machinery of a municipality. Though the exact distribution of powers differs from borough to borough according to the terms of the particular charter, Naugatuck's charter is representative. An elected Board of Warden and Burgesses have more authority and more responsibility than town selectmen but are not so powerful as a city mayor and councilmen. A budget of expenditures for public purposes is still voted by citizens at the annual town meeting, but actual spending is delegated to the Warden who, after approval by a finance committee of three burgesses, authorizes the Treasurer to make disbursements. Borough officials are in general the same as for a town. The Warden appoints members of the Board of Charities; citizens elect a bi-partisan Board of Education. Naugatuck has maintained a town clerk as well as a borough clerk, the former in charge of town records, of vital statistics, and of land transfers, the latter of records of the borough as such.

The list of Wardens from 1893 to 1947 is as follows:

George D. Bissell	1893-1894
F. F. Schaffer	1894-1895
	1898-1903
E. E. Stevens	1895-1897
John J. Gorman	1897-1898
	1903-1904
W. T. Rodenbach	1904-1906
	1907-1908
Harry Roberts	1906-1907
Thomas O'Loughlin	1908-1909
J. W. Rogers	1909-1910
Wm. J. Neary	1910-1912
A. Barton Cross, Jr.	1912-1914

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Howard B. Tuttle .....	1914-1918
.....	1919-1920
John J. Carroll .....	1918-1919
John F. McDonough .....	1920-1921
Walter E. Brown .....	1921-1922
Harris Whittemore, Jr. ....	1922-1924
.....	1925-1927
.....	1932-1934
Michael J. Langford .....	1924-1925
Arvid J. Anderson .....	1927-1928
Frank T. Green .....	1928-1929
.....	1930-1932
Frank S. Lobdell .....	1929-1930
John J. Sheridan .....	1934-1941
Leo J. Brophy .....	1941-1945



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